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~Introduction~

My name is Fawn Starling. I'm a fourth year Gryffindor student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. I'm extremely quiet and don't have any friends at school. I don't mind though, I hangout a lot with the Hogwarts Game Keeper Rubeus Hagrid and I'm also really close with the teachers. People think it's weird, they say I'm like the teachers pet, but once again, I don't mind what the other students say.

I talk to the teachers about my issues and gossip and they listen. I talk lot's with Professor McGonagall and Professor Sprout about my girl troubles. I also love magical creatures and Hagrid teaches me a lot about them. He let's me go into the Forbidden Forest with him so I could pet the unicorns and help take care of them.

I'm a very good student too. I study loads and have gotten high marks on all my tests, exams and assignments. I hope that in my fifth year, I get to be a Prefect.

I've never had any interest in making friends and I never cared that the other students never notice me or that the girls in my Dorm tease me for being alone and being friends with teachers. I also never thought about getting a boyfriend and I didn't have a crush on anyone, but this fourth year, all of that would change.

~1~ A New School Year

I was on the Hogwarts Express on my way to my fourth year at Hogwarts. I was sitting alone in a compartment, curled up in a seat and pouring over my Potions book. No one ever came to sit with me and I never went to sit with them. I liked being alone, it was peaceful. I never had to worry about peoples drama and I could just do my own thing, and not give a damn about what other people thought.

Anyway, the train finally arrived at Hogwarts and I stepped off, hauling my trunk, owl cage, and broomstick towards the carriages that would take us to the castle. I heard the familiar call of "Over here firs' years! Over here!" and I looked up to see Hagrid.

"Hi Hagrid!" I called out grinning.

Hagrid grinned back and waved. "Fawn! I hope you had a good summer!"

I went over to a carriage and put my stuff in. A small group came to sit in the same carriage as me, but they pretended I wasn't there. I spent the ride admiring the beautiful castle underneath the stars. When we arrived at Hogwarts, everyone walked into the Great Hall and sat down. The sorting started and then it was time to eat. As I was reaching over for a bowl of peas, a head popped up through the table.

"Nick!" I greeted warmly.

The Gryffindor ghost Nearly Headless Nick smiled at me. "Fawn! How was your summer?" he asked, floating in front of me.

"Oh it was wonderful, I went to Italy with my parents and visited the Colosseum in Rome!"

He smiled. "Sounds like fun."

"It was, I wish I could go again."

After the food, the tables cleared and it was time to go to bed. I went up to my Dorm and flopped on my bed. As I was pulling the curtains around my bed, the three other girls in my year burst into the room.

Katherine Abbott and Olivia Jones waved to me and smiled. They were nice enough. We weren't friends but they spoke to me occasionally. But our third roommate, Anna Davis, wrinkled her nose at me. "Oh, your still here." was all she said before turning away.

I turned over in my bed, smiling to myself. Same old Hogwarts.

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I woke up the next morning, got ready for the day and went downstairs to find everyone crowded around the notice board. I scooched between a few people and read the sign. My heart jumped.

Hello Gryffindor's! We are looking for one new Chaser, one new Beater and a new Seeker! If you are interested in joining our Quidditch team, come to tryouts on Saturday, September 6. It will be held at the Quidditch Pitch at 2pm after lunch! Hope to see you there, and good luck.
Attention: First years are NOT eligible to tryout due to Hogwarts school rules.

"Woah," I whispered, they were finally looking for a new Beater. I had to go to the tryouts.

A small and short second year boy with a mass of red hair appeared beside me, his blue eyes shining bright.

"Are you trying out?" he asked me breathlessly.
~~~~~~

I was surprised for a moment, that someone had actually talked to me, off their own accord. But I got over my shock quickly and smiled. "Yea I am, I'm trying out for the Beater spot. What about you?"

He grinned. "I'm trying out for Seeker!"

I grinned back. The small boy stuck his hand out. "Charles Weasley, everyone calls me Charlie though. You can too!"

I shook his hand. "I'm Fawn Starling."

"Fawn? What an interesting name, I like it."

"Thank you."

Charlie was a very talkative young boy. He went on and on as we started walking to the Great Hall for breakfast. When we arrived at the Hall, I was about to say goodbye since I expected he would want to sit with someone else, but he just followed me and sat across from me.

"I'm so happy I'm finally in second year since I can now try out for Quidditch! I practice a lot at home with my older brother Bill. Do you know him? He's in fourth year and he's the Goal Keeper on the team You're in fourth year too right? What's it like? When's your birthday? Are you still thirteen? I'm still eleven. I have a late birthday. My birthday is December twelve. Bill's birthday is late too, his is in November. His full name is William. Is Fawn short for something? Oh! You take Care of Magical Creatures right? I can't *wait* 'till third year!" Charlie kept rambling on and I laughed as I poured some syrup on my pancakes.

"*Relax* Charlie, your making my head spin!" I grabbed a platter of eggs and tipped some onto my plate.

The tips of his ears turned red. "Sorry, did I ramble again? I do that when I get exited."

I smiled. "It's alright. To answer your questions, yes I'm still thirteen, my birthday is November twentieth. No, Fawn isn't short for anything, it's my full name, and fourth year is great! I love it."

Charlie shoved some porridge into his mouth then said "Where are your friends? How come you're not sitting with them?"

I cocked my head to the side. "Where are *your* friends?" I countered.

"They're still in the common room, they take a *million* years to get ready." he said.

I bit my lip. Normally, it never bothered me that I didn't have any friends, but for some reason I felt embarrassed to tell Charlie.

"I, um, don't have any friends." I mumbled. "Unless you count the teachers."

Charlie mouth opened in surprise but then he closed it to a smile. "I'll be your friend! If you want."

My heart fluttered at the adorable little boy's sweetness. "Sure, I'd love to be your friend."

Just then, two more second year kids came up to us, one boy and one girl. The boy sat beside me and the girl sat beside Charlie.

Charlie pointed to the girl. "That's Rue Knight" Rue waved eagerly to me.

"And that's Damon Flynn." Damon looked up at me and grinned.

"They are my best friends since first year." he told me. Then he turned to Rue and Damon.
"This is Fawn Starling, I met her in the common room, y'know, when you were still *putting on your makeup,*" he said to Rue, who rolled her eyes and started eating.

Rue looked like the definition of a cool, badass girl. From the purple streaks in her long black hair to the dark eye makeup that I would never be able to pull off, and she had at least three earrings on each ear.

"I love your makeup," I complimented.

She looked up and smiled. "Thanks! Oooo can I do yours one time? I've always wanted to do someone's makeup."

I laughed. "Of course you can."

Damon looked a lot less *out there*. He had blond hair that fell over his eyes and seemed to be more of the soft and quiet type, the total opposite of Charlie's talkative character and Rue's appearance. Damon was a lot more like me I suppose.

We were all talking when Anna Davis flounced up to me and picked a piece of toast off my plate.

"Would you look at this!" she cooed after taking a bite. "The little antelope has friends who aren't sixty years old!"

She looked over at Charlie, Rue and Damon. Rue's eyes had turned dangerously bright.

Anna pursed her lips. "Hm, shame. You're friends with little children now are you? Cute little second year baby's?"

"Leave me alone Anna," I said quietly.

A few people around me had stopped talking and were now watching our conversation unfold.

She leaned in. "Sorry antelope? I didn't hear you."

"I said leave me alone!" I spoke louder.

Anna reached over and lightly tugged my hair. I stood up angrily, grabbed my bag and stormed out of the Great Hall, leaving Anna yelling "Yea run away like a hunter after a deer!" and Damon yelling "Wait don't go!"

I trudged to Greenhouse number 2 for the first class of the day, Herbology. I'd be seeing Anna again, since we were in the same year. I walked into the greenhouse and threw my bag on the floor, slumping onto a chair, and propping my chin on my hand.

"What's wrong dear?" asked Professor Sprout, looking up from her

paperwork.

I sighed. "Three second year kids were hanging out with me at breakfast. I was surprised, no one ever hangs out with me. Then Anna Davis came up and started making fun of me for hanging out with twelve year old's"

Sprout looked at me. "But you never get bothered by kids teasing you,"

"I know but.... I guess it was the fact that those kids came up to me themselves and were so *friendly*, and Anna just had to ruin that for me."

Sprout was quiet for a moment. "Could I ask who the children were? The Second years I mean."

I nodded. "Charlie Weasley, Rue Knight and Damon Flynn."

Sprout smiled. "Oh they are *lovely."*

The rest of the class came and we started Herbology. Anna wasn't stupid enough to pick a fight with a teacher watching, but she bumped my shoulder as she walked past me.

The next class was potions. I sat towards the back, sitting at a table by myself.

"Today, we will be learning to make the Calming Draught. Who in this room, can tell me what that is?" Professor Snape asked.

I raised my hand and Snape pointed to me.

"The Calming Draught is used when someone needs to calm down after having an emotional outburst or they suffer from a shock." I said.

Snape nodded. "Very good, 5 points to Gryffindor."

I smiled to myself. I was the only one who ever got points to Gryffindor by Snape. As Snape started droning on about the potion, I found myself staring at Bill Weasley, Charlie's brother. I've

had classes with Bill for the past three years, but we have never spoken a word to each other. I doubt he even knew my name.

He was sitting towards the front with his best friend's Lucas Watcher and Finley Moore. The three of them were quite popular with the girls, especially Bill. Potions class ended and I filled my flask with my finished potion. It was a turquoise blue, just like how it should be. I placed it on Snape's desk, bade him goodbye, then went to lunch.

Unfortunately, Charlie, Rue and Damon were not there so I ate lunch by myself before rushing off to Charms. Professor Flitwick greeted me warmly, then class started. Charms was always a rush of loud bangs, noises and things exploding. When I went to dinner, I saw Rue and Damon. I slid into the seat next to Rue.

"Where's Charlie?" I asked.

Damon smirked. "We just had Transfiguration and little Charles managed to accidently turn half of his hair into worms."

I gasped. "Is he alright?"

Rue waved a hand. "He'll be fine.....oh look there he is now!"

We all turned to see Charlie rushing into the hall, avoiding being hit on the head by Bill and collapsed into the seat next to me. "I accidently-"

"I know, Damon told me." I laughed.

Charlie, Rue and Damon started play fighting and I laughed. These three were going to make this year fun.

~2~ Quidditch Tryouts

That night after dinner, Charlie, Rue, Damon and I were lounging around in the Gryffindor Common Room. The other three were groaning and complaining about eating too much food while I pulled out my Charms essay to start working on.

Rue eyeballed me like I was crazy. "You're gonna do homework on the *first day?"*

I shrugged. "I like finishing homework right away so that I can have more time to do other stuff."

Charlie sighed. "I should start Snape's essay, but *I'm. too. Tired."*

I shook my head and bent down, flipping though my charms book for some reference, when a voice said "Charlie, how was your first day back 'lil bro?"

I glanced up to see Bill coming over and sitting at the end of the sofa that I was sitting on. He didn't even glance at me. I looked back down at my book and scooted further away from Bill.

"It was fine," Charlie mumbled.

"Except for the fact that he turned half of his hair into worms in Transfiguration." Rue said smirking.

Charlie growled while Damon and I laughed. My laughter caught Bill's attention.

"Ah and who's this?" he said to me. "Are you in third year?"

I blinked. He had to be joking. There was *no way* he didn't remember my face *at all* after having classes with me everyday for the past *three years*.

"I'm sorry?" I asked politely.

"Are you in third year?" he repeated and I felt my heart sink.

"I'm in fourth year." I said tonelessly.

Bill's eyes widened and his ears turned red.

"I- what? But-" he sputtered. "I never noticed you before!"

"Hm yes, quite strange isn't it." I said sarcastically. "There aren't too many people in our year and we have been having classes together *everyday* for *three years,"*

"I'm really sorry....er...what was your name again?"

I stood up and collected my things. "Fawn Starling." I said. "I'm tired I'm going to bed. Night Charlie, Rue, Damon."

I ruffled Charlie's hair as I walked past. I heard Charlie say "Wow, way to go Bill. How thick can you get?" and I almost smiled at his words.

~ ~ ~

The rest of the week passed by in a blur. We had tons of homework and Charlie, Rue, Damon and I were getting closer everyday. I started seeing them as the little siblings I've always wanted.
Bill kept trying to talk to me and walk me to classes, but I always made up excuses and walked away from him. I don't know why I was so offended. I always knew he wouldn't know my name or something, but the fact that he didn't even know my face really hurt.

Even his best friends, Lucas Watcher and Finley Moore were surprised at Bill. I overheard them talking before Transfiguration one day.

"You seriously don't remember her *at all?"* Lucas asked.

Bill shook his head sheepishly.

Finley clicked his tongue. "Damn Bill, you're not so bright are you?"

Bill's ears turned a bright cherry red. I noticed this in both Bill and

Charlie, where their ears would get red whenever they got embarrassed or flustered.

On Friday night, I sat in the common room doing homework with Charlie as Rue and Damon played Wizard Chess at our feet.

"Hey Charles, do you think I'm overreacting?" I asked Charlie, putting my History of Magic essay down. "By ignoring Bill?"

Charlie looked up from his Potions essay and thought for a moment. "Nah, you're giving him what he deserves." Then under his breath he muttered "The stupid little git."

I snorted with laughter, feeling a bit better. I decided to go visit McGonagall and ask for her opinion. After dinner, I knocked on her office and heard "Come in!" I walked in and McGonagall looked at me, giving me a smile. "Miss. Starling, to what do I owe this pleasure?"

I smiled back. "I was wondering if I could get your opinion on something."

She peered at me from above her glasses. "Related to school?"

"No, Professor."

She gestured to the chair that was in front of her desk. "Sit."

I sat down and she bustled around making tea. "Sugar?"

"Yes please," I replied.

She handed me a cup of tea, pushed a tin of biscuits towards me. "What seems to be the problem Miss. Starling?"

I took a shortbread cookie. "Well, there is, er, someone, and well, um....."
I stumbled over my words, feeling awkward. I wasn't awkward with McGonagall, I just wasn't sure where to start.

"There is someone who I've been having classes with everyday for the past three years but he didn't even know my face! I've been

ignoring him but I have no idea if I'm being over dramatic or not." I paused for a moment. "I also think he's really cute and maybe that's why I feel offended." I blurted out. My eyes widened and I smacked my hand over my mouth, realizing what I just said, to a *Professor*.

McGonagall looked at me. "Is this about Mr. William Weasley?" she asked.

I gasped. "How did you-?"

"I could see how Mr. Weasley was trying to get your attention but you kept ignoring him." she thought for a moment. "No, I do not think you're overreacting, although I will say, I suggest you give him a chance."

I nodded. "Maybe I will." I glanced at the clock. "I think I should go now, Quidditch tryouts are tomorrow."

McGonagall smiled as she lead me to the door. "I am most looking forward to seeing you play on the team when you make it through,"

I looked up at her. "*If* I make it through."

She shook her head firmly. *"When* you make it through. I have complete faith in you Fawn."

I grinned. "Goodnight Professor."

"Goodnight Miss. Starling."

I reached the Common Room and walked in to see Charlie pacing around the room, wringing his hands together.

"Will you stop doing that Charlie?" Rue burst out. "You're making me nervous for no reason!"

"What's up 'lil Charles?" I asked, dropping down onto the sofa and patting the seat next to me. Charlie flopped down beside me and sighed.

"I'm scared for tryouts tomorrow. I'm sure I won't get through," he

said glumly.

"Charlie, don't say that, you need to have faith in yourself. You *will* get through."

"You really think so?"

"I *know* so," I said firmly. "How about this. Tomorrow after breakfast, you and I can warmup around the pitch before lunch. How does that sound?"

Charlie grinned. "Sounds good!"

I hugged him and bade them all goodnight.

~ ~ ~

The next morning, I woke up to someone hitting me around the head with a pillow. I groaned and looked up to see Rue.

"Hurry up, you promised Charlie you'd fly with him this morning." she said. "The poor boy is going ballistic and it's making *me* go ballistic."

I laughed, and dragged myself out of bed. I rushed downstairs to see Damon waiting for me in the Common Room.

"Charlie and Rue went to breakfast already." he informed me. We went to the Great Hall.

I had just sat down and only eaten half of a toast, when Charlie started dragging me off of my seat. "Let's gooooo!"

"But my breakfast!" I complained.

Charlie grabbed a stack of toast, put them into a napkin and handed it to me. "Breakfast to go. Now *come one!*"

I took the napkin from him and started eating while grumbling about him needing to learn patience, but all my annoyance washed away when we stepped onto the pitch. I hadn't been on my broom in over a week. I stepped into my broom and took off, feeling the adrenaline rush through me.

"Hey wait for me!" Charlie called.

"Try to keep up slowpoke!" I yelled back

Charlie was a really good flier. We zoomed in and out of the goal posts and did loop de loop's around the Pitch. Rue, Damon and Bill had come to watch us fly. I tried not to feel shy when I saw Bill, who waved at me, and once again I ignored him.

After a couple hours, it was time for lunch. And after lunch, it was tryouts.

Charlie and I stood next to each other along with a bunch of other Gryffindor's who came to tryout for the team. Thankfully, Anna, Olivia and Katherine were not Quidditch fan's, so I didn't have to worry about them here.

The 6th year Quidditch Captain, Alfie Campbell, stood with Bill, Lewis Murphy from 5th year and Alice Rogers from 7th. Alfie and Alice were Chasers, Lewis was the other Beater and Bill was the Goal Keeper.

Alfie clapped his hands. "Alright everyone pipe down!"

Everyone went quite and looked at him. Charlie was shivering beside me and he slipped his small hand into mine. I squeezed it and looked down. Charlie was small and short for an 11, year old child. The top of his head barely reached my shoulder, and I wasn't a really tall person either. Rue and Damon were quite a bit taller than the both of us.

Alfie had everyone fly around the pitch and started eliminating people bit by bit until in the end, there was only a small handful of us left.

Alfie looked at us and smiled. "After a wonderful session of tryouts, I have come to my choose my Chaser, Beater and Seeker."

Charlie and I were gripping each other's hands tightly.

"Our third Chaser is going to be... Connie Smith!"

A small third year girl with short blond hair came forward, smiling as everyone clapped, the other people who tried out as chasers leaving the pitch grumpily.

"And our second Beater is... Fawn Starling!"

My mouth dropped open. I couldn't believe it. I was a *Beater!*

Charlie jumped up and hugged me. "Congrats Fawn!"

I grinned and walked over to the rest of the team. The other Beaters walked off the pitch with heavy sighs and glares at Alfie. Lewis Murphy thumped my back and smiled. "Welcome aboard Fawn!"

Alfie looked at the remaining people, the Seekers. I held my breath as Alfie's eyes raked over them.

"And our new Seeker is..." he paused for dramatic effect. "Charles Weasley!"

Charlie rushed forward. Bill, thinking Charlie was going to him, opened his arms, only for Charlie to dart past him and tackle me to the ground.

"I'm seeker! I'M A BLOODY SEEKER CAN YOU BELIEVE IT FAWN!"

I laughed as I gasped for breath. "Calm yourself Charlie."

He got up and we both stood up just as Rue and Damon came running across the pitch and tackled us once again to the ground.

"What is it with you three and tackling!" I yelled, but I couldn't help but grin at everyone.

Bill came over and pulled Damon off of me before offering me a hand. I hesitated, but took it as he helped me up. "Well done Fawn! Can't wait to play Quidditch with you."

I smiled. "Thanks, I'm really exited to play Quidditch with you too Bill."

And I meant it

~3~ Visiting Hagrid

A few days after getting into the Quidditch team, I got a note at breakfast. I tore it open and saw the familiar messy scrawl of Hagrid's writing.

Fawn,
I have a surprise. Come to my hut tonight after dinner. Don't tell your friends or anyone else, come alone.

Hagrid.

I sighed. Normally when Hagrid said 'Come alone' or 'Don't tell anyone', it meant bad trouble was coming.

Damon tried to look over my shoulder. "Who's that from?" he asked.

I stuffed the letter into my pocket. "My mum," I lied.

~ ~ ~
That night, I was sitting in the common room with Charlie, Rue and Damon doing homework. I had to wait until they went up to their dorms before I could go to Hagrid's.

"Are you not going to sleep Fawn?" asked Charlie, standing up with a yawn. "It's nearly one in the morning."

I shook my head. "Nah, too much homework. You wait until you're in fourth year."

They went upstairs and I waited until the last person left the room, and I quickly climbed out of the portrait hole. I walked quietly through the castle. Thankfully, I didn't bump into anyone. Once I was outside, I pulled my hood over my head and ran to Hagrid's house.

I knocked on Hagrid's door and he opened it, grinning down at me. "Fawn! Come 'ere you,"
He pulled me into his house then gave me a bone-crushing hug that

lifted me off my feet.
"How come ye never visit me anymo'?"

"I have so much homework and-, wait Hagrid why is the house all foggy and, ugh, *what* is that *smell?* It's revolting!"

The house smelled like rotten eggs and I could barely see anything from the thick fog.

Hagrid grinned at me. "Well, you see, dragon eggs need the heat of their mum's, but since my egg don't have a mum, I'm making heat for the egg!"

I nodded and sat down on a seat before it registered what he just said. "Wait, WHAT? YOU HAVE A *DRAGON EGG* IN YOUR *HOUSE?*"

Hagrid looked alarmed. "No need to shou', It's not a big dea-"

"Not a big deal?" I hissed. "Hagrid this is probably illegal!"

Hagrid waved a hand. "Nah, this Hungarian Horntail will grow up to be fine."

I smacked my forehead. "And it's the most dangerous dragon too?"

Hagrid then started rambling on about the dragon egg. I was too exhausted to even brother asking where he got the egg from. When I looked at the clock, I saw that it was nearly three in the morning.

"Hagrid, I need to go," I said, jumping out of my chair.

Hagrid looked at the clock and jumped. "Blimey! You have Quidditch tomorrow righ'?

I nodded.

"Well go on then," said Hagrid as he shooed me out. "Visit me mo' often won't ye?"

"Course I will." I said, pulling my hood over my head once again. I started walking back towards the castle, the cold wind brushing my face. I suddenly heard a shout.

I turned around to see the caretaker Filch rushing towards me. I panicked, and started running, but his stupid cat Mrs. Norris darted in front of me and I tripped over her, my face slamming on the ground and my lip splitting open.

Filch grabbed the hood of my jacket and yanked me up, grinning nastily at me. "What do we have here? I've finally caught you out of bed Starling. I've always known you weren't the perfect student the teachers believe."

Filch dragged me to his office, and told me to sit in front of his desk. I sat down as he took out a piece of parchment paper and started writing. "Name, Fawn Starling. Offence, caught out of bed past curfew. Sentenced to, detention, cleaning the trophy room." he finished writing and looked at me. "Tomorrow night, 8pm sharp after dinner. Come to this office for your detention. Now go."

I quickly left the office and rushed off to the common room.

"Fairy Lights" I said to the Fat Lady, who looked at me with a frown.

"Staying out late again Starling? When will you learn?"

I growled. "I got detention alright? Now open up, I gave you the password."

"No need for that tone missy," she said but opened up for me anyway.

I climbed awkwardly into the room, still holding my sleeve against my bleeding lip. I was so tired and annoyed that I didn't notice that someone dozing off in a chair, but he jumped up when I walked in.

"Fawn!" said the figure.

"Bill?" I said, my voice muffled from my hand on my mouth.

Bill Weasley's ears turned red. "I, uhm, I saw you running back from Hagrid's house and I saw Filch catch you."

I blinked. "You saw me? From your dorm?"

He nodded. "I was looking out the window, couldn't sleep, then I saw you fall and, uh.... yeah."

We looked at each other awkwardly. I was still holding my lip.

"But why are you here?" I asked.

Bill shuffled his feet. "I wanted to make sure you were alright It looked like a nasty fall."

Then his head snapped up and he came towards me. He grabbed my arm and lead me to a sofa. "Wait right here," he said before I could even protest.

He ran upstairs, then came back down holding a bowl of water in one hand, and a towel in the other. He sat beside me and placed the bowl onto his lap.

"Let me see your lip,"

I hesitated, but lowered my hand.

He frowned. "That's a bad cut. Here."

He dipped the towel into the bowl of water and gently pressed it against my lip. I was suddenly aware of how close Bill was to me. His knees pressed against mine, his soft fingers touching my cheek, and his warm breath close to my face. He removed the towel and touched my lip gently with his fingers. "Seems a bit better."

We looked at each other for a few seconds, before I broke the silence.

"Thanks, a lot. Um, I think I'll go to bed. Y'know, Quidditch tomorrow and all."

Bill looked a bit disappointed but forced a smile. "Yea, alright see you tomorrow."

I quickly ran upstairs and climbed into bed. My heart was hammering, and I felt happy and- Oh my god, did I have a crush on Bill Weasley? Bill, the one who didn't know I existed after three

years. Bill, Charlie's older brother. Bill, one of the most popular guys, one who would *never* be with someone like me. I am way too different, and shy.

But wait, did Bill like me? I remembered the way he blushed when he saw me, the way he looked concerned when he saw that I was hurt. I sighed and drifted off to sleep.

~4~ Quidditch Game

The next morning, I woke up to someone shaking me. Opening one eye, I saw Alice standing over me.

"Can I help you?" I asked, looking at the clock. "It's five in the morning!"

Alice rolled her eyes. "I know, I wish I was still sleeping. Alfie wants us all on the pitch in fifteen minutes and he told me to come and wake your ass up."

I had only gotten about an hour and a half of sleep and I was exhausted. I got out of bed and got ready for practice, while cursing Alfie under my breath. I grabbed my broom and walked downstairs to see Charlie and Bill waiting for me.

Charlie looked at me. "Bloody hell, you look horrible!"

"Thanks," I said tartly. "I appreciate that."

"What time did you stay up until?"

I rubbed my eyes. "I don't know maybe three in the morning?"

"Doing homework?"

Bill caught my eye and we looked away awkwardly.

"Um, yea, homework." I mumbled.

When we arrived on the pitch, I saw Lewis and Connie looking super sleepy while Alfie strode over looking wide awake.

"Alright! First match is in a month and it's against Slytherin. We want to be our best and we want to *win*." he reached over and smacked Bill's head. Bill was dozing off, his head lolling towards my shoulder. "Wake up, *William*."

After he dramatic speech, we all got onto our brooms and shot off into the air. Feeling the cold wind biting my cheeks helped me wake up.

Lewis and I worked pretty well together. The Bludger was shooting to Connie and I zoomed forward and smacked it to Lewis, who smacked it back to me while we flew through our teammates.

After practice and Breakfast, we had Transfiguration. I went to sit at my usual seat in the back, but a hand grabbed me by the back of my collar and dragged me towards the front of the room.

"You're sitting with us from now on Starling," said Bill as he forced me to sit between him and Lucas.

I smiled shyly at Lucas Watcher and Finley Moore. They greeted me warmly. When McGonagall strode into the room, she paused, looking surprised to see me sitting at the front with the three boys. I swore she smiled slightly at me before continuing her class.

Later that night, I had my detention with Filch. After detention, which ended at at midnight, I walked like a zombie back up to the common room. I went in to see Bill sitting and reading a book. He looked up and patted the seat next to him.

I sat down. "Hi Bill,"

"Hey, how was detention?"

"Oh it was *wonderful*," I said sarcastically. "I got to clean trophies! How fun."

Bill sniggered. "Sounds fun, I wish I could've been there."

I rolled my eyes. "Yea, totally."

We were silent for a few moments when I said. "Oh and um, thanks for yesterday, I appreciate it."

Bill smiled. "Anytime. I'm glad to see that your wound is better." He reached over and placed his fingers on my lip, scooting closer to me, before he realized what he was doing and quickly snapped his

hand back. "Oh I-, Sorry, I didn't-"

I leaned forwards and pecked him on the cheek. "Goodnight Bill,"

His ears turned red. "Goodnight."

Oh my god I couldn't believe I kissed him on the cheek. *Stupid stupid stupid.*

Bill and I never spoke again about that night when I kissed his cheek, we just acted normal as if nothing ever happened.

The next month flew by and it was suddenly October 25, the Quidditch match against Slytherin.

Everyone was sitting quietly during breakfast. We were all too nervous to speak. The Slytherin's kept jeering at us, and Alfie told us to ignore them. Before we went onto the pitch, Lucas and Finley stopped Bill and I.

"Good luck man." the two boys each fist bumped Bill.

Finley turned to me and hugged me. "Good luck Fawn."

I was surprised with him hugging me, but I wrapped my arms around him. "Thanks Finley.

Lucas hugged me too, before Alfie came over and dragged us apart. "Let's go!"

Soon, we were in the changing room. I was clutching my broom and my Beater bat. Lewis and Connie were both pacing around the room. Alfie was pinching the bridge of his nose. Alice was sitting with her eyes closed, as if she was praying. Bill was sitting with his eyes staring ahead while Charlie had turned a light shade of green.

I looked over at Bill and we made eye contact, giving each other small smiles before looking away.

Then, the match started. I wasn't even listening to the commentator. I focused on the two Bludgers that were zooming about, trying to knock people off their brooms.

I was shooting towards Alfie as a Bludger shot towards him and I had just smashed it away when I felt something crash against my knee, pain making my eyes blur. I saw a Bludger whizzing past me and I realized that it must have been what hit me. My knee was most definitely broken. I still managed to keep flying, although my right leg was dangling around. I hit a Bludger towards the Slytherin Keeper when I suddenly heard.....

"AND WEASLEY HAS CAUGHT THE SNITCH. GRYFFINDOR HAS WON THE MATCH AGAINST SLYTHERIN."

I looked up to see Charlie holding the Golden Snitch and grinning. I tilted my broom towards the ground and landed heavily. With my broken knee, I couldn't stand, so I compromised by lying down on my side, panting in pain and exhaustion while holding my broken knee.

Everyone was hugging Charlie and Lewis lifted him into his shoulders.

"Wait where's Fawn?" asked Charlie, looking around.

Bill turned around and saw me on the ground. He rushed over. "What happened, are you alright?"

"Broken leg," I said, my face turning pale.

Bill gingerly picked me up. "I'm going to take you to the hospital wing, alright?"

With him holding me securely in his arms, he started walking to the hospital wing. Looking up at his face, I had the sudden desire to kiss him, and that really scared me.

When we arrived at the Hospital Wing, Madam Pomfrey came rushing forward.

"What happened?"

"Broken leg," I replied weakly. The pain shooting up my leg was making me feel dizzy.

Pomfrey nodded. "Alright, Mr. Weasley, set her on that bed over there. I'll be right back Miss. Starling."

Bill walked over to a bed and set me down. I groaned as my leg hit the bed and he grimaced. "Sorry,"

Pomfrey came running back with her wand raised. She ran her wand up and down my leg while muttering "Nasty game, don't understand it, always getting hurt in Quidditch."

My leg felt a lot better but still hurt slightly.

"It's going to hurt for a couple of days Starling, you're spending the night and you can leave tomorrow morning." said Pomfrey.

I thanked her as she handed me some pajamas. I closed the curtains and I quickly put them on, then drew back the curtains again to find Bill still standing there.

"You're always managing to get yourself hurt, huh Fawn," he said, sitting down on a chair.

"Yep, that's me,"

The rest of the team burst into the room.

"I can't believe he won!" cried Charlie as he flung himself on me.

The team had brought food and drinks and were just settling down when Madam Pomfrey came in an shooed everyone out. "GET OUT YOU CAN SEE HER TOMMOROW."

~5~ Secret Exposed

Authors note. Trigger Warning: Mentions date rpe

The next morning, I was free to go. My knee still hurt so I had to limp slightly as I went to the Great Hall. When I walked through the door, all my friends and teammates jumped up and ran to hug me. The last person to hug me was Bill, and when he reached me he wrapped his arms around my waist and spun me around. He set me down and looked down at my face for a moment. My breath felt lodged in my throat, but then Connie and Alice grabbed my arms and sat me down, piling food onto my plate.

I felt Anna Davis' eyes boring into me. It was hard to imagine that we were friends last year. Or at least, she *pretended* to be my friend. I was stupid enough to trust her with one of my biggest secrets, something only my parents knew. I had told her how the summer before third year, I went on a date with a 14 year old muggle boy, who forced me to sleep with him. I was traumatized and I thought Anna would be a friend, but no. Since then, I haven't told anyone. I just hope Anna doesn't tell anyone herself. She always makes comments about it to me when no one is around us, and it hurts. It brings back haunting memories. I was only 12 when it happened. My parents blame me for it, saying it was because what I was wearing.

After Herbology and Charms, we went to Potions. I sat down with Bill, Lucas and Finley and I started pulling out my stuff when Anna yelled out "Hey Fawn! How was your summer?"

I looked at her confused. "Uh, It was fine I guess...."

I looked at the boys, who shrugged, wearing the same confused expression as me. I resumed pulling my book out when she said "Hopefully it was better than last summer, no?"

I froze, my heart beating fast. I ignored her, hoping she'd stop.

Anna started twirling a piece of her hair with her finger. "I mean, in third year, you were crying to me about what happened."

I took a shaky breath. "Shut up,"

But she kept talking. "I mean, what were you even wearing? I bet you were asking for it."

My hand started shaking. "I said shut up!"

Anna laughed. "Let me guess, you went on a date and he took you back to his house to do his business."

"SHUT THE FUCK UP ANNA!"

Bill looked between us. "Anna, whatever you're saying just sto-"

Anna spoke over him. "Stop lying and saying he forced you to sleep with him, I bet you enjoyed it..."

I stood up with a sob and fled the room, rushing passed Snape who was just coming in.
"Miss. Starling!" he called out but I ignored him.

I found an empty classroom and went in, feeling a panic attack bubbling up in my chest. I tried to take a deep breath but I couldn't. I slid down the wall and cried, as all those memories came flooding to me. Seeing him on top of me, his face getting closer as I yelled no and tried to push him away. I pressed my hands on my face, the tears seeping through.

"Fawn?"

I looked up through my blurry eyes to see Bill standing in the doorway. He came over cautiously and sat next to me.

"Aren't you supposed to be in class?" I asked.

"Snape said I could come see you, Lucas and Finley told him what happened. He said I should take you to the Hospital Wing."

I just cried harder throwing my arms around his neck. Bill wrapped

his arms around me.
"Fawn, I'm going to ask you some questions ok?"

I nodded.

"Ok," he whispered. "What are five things you can see?"

I looked around. "Your face, your hair, desks, chairs and a chalkboard."

"Ok good, what are four things you can touch or feel?"

I clenched Bill's jacket tighter, trying not to cry. "Your jacket, the floor, your hands and your hair."

"Alright, and three things you can hear?"

"Your voice, your heart and uhm, students outside."

"Very good, two things you can smell?"

I sniffed. "My shampoo and you,"

"Alright darling, last one. One thing you can taste."

"My tears." I said quietly. I felt a bit more calm, but it didn't stop the silent tears running down my face.

"Let me take you to the hospital wing. Snape said you should drink a calming draught." He said, holding me tighter.

I sniffled and nodded. He helped me stand up and walked me to the hospital wing. I kept my head bent low so the other students wouldn't see me crying. When we reached the wing and Bill said I needed a calming draught, Madam Pomfrey didn't even ask any questions. She just rushed off to get me some.

Bill lead me to a bed and sat next to me, rubbing small circles on my back as I took deep breaths. Pomfrey came back and handed me a glass of water with some calming draught in it. I drank it and instantly felt a lot better.

"Alright dear, you can stay here until you feel better ok? Leave whenever you want." she gave me a smile and quickly rushed off to another bed where a boy was retching loudly.

I had stopped crying and was staring at my shoes. Bill stayed silent, still rubbing my back. Suddenly Lucas and Finley walked in and sat on two chairs.

"Are you ok?" asked Finley.

I shrugged. "Could be better,"

Lucas nodded. "We finished Potions, then we told McGonagall what happened. She gave Anna detention for the rest of the week! And said you can have the rest of the day off."

I smiled. "Thanks for telling her."

"Of course," Lucas said. "You're our friend, and you're also Bill's cr-, um, I mean....*friend.*" he finished awkwardly as Finley smirked and Bill glared at Lucas.

I didn't even care what Lucas was going to say.

"Soooo," began Finley. "What *was* Anna talking about?"

I looked at him with raised eyebrows and he looked mortified. "I'm sorry, you don't have to- I um, maybe I'll just-"

He got up to leave but I grabbed his arm and sat him back down. "No It's fine,"

I looked down at my fingers, not really sure where to start. "Um, the summer before my third year. My muggle neighbor, he asked me out. I said yes, and then I asked my parents. They said it was fine." I felt tears brimming in my eyes again and I continued. "We went for dinner, then he asked if I wanted to go to his house to play some board gamed, I was so stupid and I went. And then he, he-," I broke off sobbing again and Bill hugged me.

"And what did your parents do?" Bill asked.

"Nothing... they said it was *my* fault. Because of what I was wearing,"

Lucas looked confused. "It was your fault because of your *outfit?"*

I nodded.

"I think we should take you to the common room," Bill said.

Finley nodded. "Oh yeah, McGonagall said you can take a break for a few days. We'll get you your homework assignments."

I smiled, grateful to have these boys as my friends.

~6~ Not Gonna Sleep In There

That night, I decided to skip dinner. I didn't want to see Anna or anyone else. Whispers of what happened to me were circulating around school. Charlie, Rue, Damon, Bill, Lucas and Finley had all brought me food, where I was sitting in the common room staring at the fireplace. After that, we all tried to do our homework but I was getting too distracted with my mind wandering off to what happened. Even Alfie and Lewis had come over to talk to me.

"Hey, we heard, er, things,... Alfie said.

Lewis smiled. "If you ever need anything, we're here for you Fawn."

When everyone went to bed, I decided I wasn't going to sleep in my dorm. Not with Anna in there. So I curled up on the couch and closed my eyes. I was just drifting off when someone started shaking my shoulders. I looked up.

"What do you want Bill," I mumbled while closing my eyes again.

"What are you *doing?"* he asked.

"Sleeping."

Before I could process what was happening, he grabbed me and hoisted me over his shoulder. "Not down here your not."

I struggled against his grip. "Let me go! I'm not sleeping in the same room as that bitch Anna Davis!"

"I'm not taking you there, you are sleeping in our dorm tonight."

And with that, he brought me to his dorm and literally threw me onto his bed. I couldn't help but laugh as I nearly fell off.

"See, I *told* you she would be sleeping downstairs!" Lucas said.

I looked over at the boys. Lucas and Finley were in their beds,

pulling the curtains around them.

"Where are you sleeping?" I asked Bill while kicking my shoes off.

Bill shrugged. "I don't know, on the ground or something..."

"You can sleep with me," I blurted out.

Bill's years turned a bright red and the other two started snickering. I also flushed.

"No, I meant, I mean.. I'm in your bed, so you can, uh I mean we're *only* going to *sleep* y'know?"

Bill stood staring at me for a few seconds before coming over, kicking his own shoes off, and sliding under the covers with me. We looked at each other then started laughing loudly.

"What is going *on?"* Finley said from behind his curtain surrounding his bed.

Lucas sighed. "Just ignore them Fin, they are total weirdos that's what's going on."

"Goodnight boys," I said.

"Goodnight."

~ ~ ~

The next morning I woke up to a bright flash that blinded me.

"What the..."

I opened my eyes to see Lucas and Finley standing there, Lucas holding a camera.

"Ah, how sweet." said Lucas grinning. "Can't *wait* to get this developed!"

The two boys rushed off giggling like children.

I looked down to see that Bill's face was buried into my neck, one of his arms draped over my stomach and my hand was resting on his

leg.

"That's a nice smell.... Bill murmured.

I blushed and suppressed a giggle. Bill finally opened his eyes, and I quickly shut mine, pretending to be asleep. I heard Bill whisper *'shit'* and then I opened my eyes as I felt him move away.

"Morning," he said brightly.

"Morning," I grinned.

"Did you sleep well?"

"Oh yes, thanks for letting me sleep here."

I quickly went to my dorm to get dressed for the day. When I walked in, Anna, Olivia and Katherine stared at me.

"Where were you?" asked Anna rudely.

"Not of your business,"

Anna growled. "Don't talk to me like that, you little slu-"

I rounded on her. "You are a little son of a bitch, you know that right? If you don't, I'm telling you now. You're rude, mean and *vile.* I feel sorry for you, I also feel sorry for anyone who's friends with you."

With that, I left the dorm room, leaving the three girls staring at me with their mouths gaping open.

When I walked down, I saw everyone waiting for me.

"Why are you so happy?" asked Charlie as Rue linked her arm with mine and we walked out of the portrait hole

"Oh no reason." I said grinning.

~7~ A Harsh Start To Christmas Break

The rest of term passed pretty quickly and soon we were on the Hogwarts Express going home for the Christmas holidays. Bill and Charlie wanted me to go over to theirs for the break but my parents wanted me to stay with them.

My birthday, Bill's birthday and Charlie's had past and we all celebrated them together back at Hogwarts. My birthday was only about 9 days before Bill's, and Charlie thought it was really funny that I was somewhat older than Bill.

We were all sitting in a compartment talking and laughing. Charlie was laying across the seat with his head on my lap, sleeping and snoring lightly. Rue and Damon were sitting on the ground playing Exploding Snap at our feet while Bill, Lucas and Finley were on the seat across from me and Charlie, arguing about who the cutest girl was.

"No, Emily in Ravenclaw is definitely the cutest." said Finley.

Lucas shook his head. "I think Connie is,"

I looked up. "Oooo, Connie from the Quidditch team?"

Lucas blushed. "Yeah, she's pretty cute."

I smiled. "She's really nice,"

Lucas bit his lip then turned to Bill. "Who do *you* think is the cutest?"

Finley chuckled while Bill's ear turned red and he glared at Lucas. "No one, just leave me alone."

Bill turned to Damon. "What about you Damon?"

Damon shrugged, not taking his eyes off the game. "I don't know, never really thought about it."

I smirked and started playing with Charlie's hair. He was still sleeping. "We're not saying you have to like them, just who is really good looking,"

Damon thought for a moment. "I guess Rue and Fawn,"

Rue smiled. "Why thank you," she said while I reached down and ruffled Damon's hair.

I looked out the window, thinking about going home. I didn't *want* to go home. I didn't even really miss my parents. I was adopted. I was left on their doorstep when I was only a few weeks old. They found me and took me in, they treated me like I was their own but they still weren't the best kind of parents. I looked really different from them, so people always got shocked before we reveal I'm adopted. They have curly, blond hair and pale faces and blue eyes while I have jet-black straight hair, olive coloured skin and dark eyes.

They weren't the kindest people, not even to me. They cared for me in certain ways, but didn't care in others. They yelled for no reason and they blamed me for almost everything. They were coincidentally Wizard and Witch, but they have no clue who my real parents are. I never really bothered trying to figure it out, I had too much shit going on at home.

I felt someone tug my hair lightly, pulling me out of my thoughts.

"Are you ok?" Bill asked looking concerned. "You've been spaced out for a while."

I nodded. "I'm fine, just thinking about.... things."

We reached the platform and dragged our things off the train. Rue, Damon, Lucas and Finley hugged me and the other two then rushed off to their parents.

I looked around and finally found my parents. Since they're the ones who raised me, I just call them Mum and dad

"Right," I said turning to Bill and Charlie. "I see my parents over there, so have a good break!" I hugged Charlie tightly.

When I hugged Bill, he grabbed my hand.

"Fawn, I remember you saying your parents blame you for, y'know, what happened."

I looked at him confused. "Um, yea. Why?"

"If anything happens, come over to my place ok? Our house is called The Burrow.'"

I smiled. "Thanks," I said before walking to my parents.

Authors Note: TW: Abuse

The next few days passed without much difference. One day, about a week before Christmas, I was sitting curled up in a chair in the living room knitting some hat's, scarfs and gloves for my friends' presents. I had already made hats for Bill and Charlie, and was now making some for the others. Charlie's hat had a bunch of Golden Snitches while Bill's had little Keeper Hoops. It was hard knitting these patterns without magic.

As I was knitting, I thought of asking my parents a question I was always too afraid to ask.

"Hey um, mum? Dad? Can I ask you a question?"

My mum put down her own knitting while my dad put down the Daily Prophet and looked at me.

"So, uh, I was wondering, if you said yes to me going on that date, how is it my fault that he, you know..."

My dad's eyes flashed dangerously while my mum pressed her lips in a thin line.

"I'm going to make myself some tea" she said shortly and going to the kitchen.

My dad stood up, walked over to me and stood in front of me. "And why, would you ask that?"

I bit my lip. "I was just curious," I mumbled.

"You think it's our fault?"

I nodded. "Well, no. But, It's not fair that you blame me for what I was wearing."

I was cut short by my dad slapping me. I gasped, pressing my hand against my stinging cheek. He had *never* hit me before.

"Explain how it's unfair." he said softly.

I took a shuddering breath. "I came home and asked you for permission first, you and mum both said yes. And you said yes to my outfit when I showed it to you guys."

He glared at me. "We were teaching you a lesson!"

I stood up. "How?! You should have said no if you didn't want me to! You should have told me to change my shorts! You're my parents! You're supposed to protect me and teach me! Teach me by telling me, not letting me try and fail! You're supposed to tell me what could happen so I could know! YOU BOTH ARE THE WORST PARENTS!" I yelled.

My dad stood stock still, staring at me, before punching me in the face. I staggered backwards, my nose was stinging, it was obviously broken. He kicked me, and hit me until I felt like I couldn't move. I was sobbing quietly.

He leaned down and whispered "If you don't like our parenting, then move out."

I felt angry. I was furious. Then I remembered what Bill had told me at the train station.

If anything happens, come over to my place ok? Our house is called 'The Burrow.'

"I will," I whispered.

I stood up, clutching my aching side and went up to my room. I started throwing things into my trunk. My clothes, books, everything I needed. I managed to stuff my broomstick in my trunk too. I grabbed my wand and owl cage, with my owl Snowy inside. I limped back downstairs to see my dad still standing in the living room.

"So you're really leaving?" he asked, his eyes trailing to my trunk and Snowy.

I placed my trunk and Snowy's cage in the fireplace then grabbed my knitting, putting them into my trunk. I turned to my dad. "Yea, I already know where I'm going."

My dad nodded, then hit me again. "You're a worthless little bitch, and you're ungrateful," he kept hitting me and hitting me, until I was curled up on the ground again, whimpering in pain. I managed to drag myself to the fireplace. My dad pushed Floo Powder into my hand.

"Get the fuck out of here," he snarled.

"The Burrow!" I choked out.

I was sent whirling past fireplaces, then I finally tumbled out into a living room, groaning in pain.

"ARGHHH!" a voice cried. "What the- wait *Fawn?"*

I was laying facedown on the carpet, sobbing and gasping for breath. Everything hurt. My face, my legs, my side. I felt someone try to lift my face up, but I wouldn't let them.

"Fawn, it's me Charlie. Are you alright? Why are you crying? Stop hiding your face! I'm going to go get Bill,"

I heard footsteps rushing off then footsteps coming back.

"Fawn!" Bill's voice choked out.

I felt his gentle fingers touch my chin, and this time, I looked up. He sucked in a sharp breath when he saw my face, his eyes widening. My face was blooded and bruised. My nose was broken and I could barely open my left eye.

"What happened?" he breathed.

"My dad," I whispered before blacking out.

~8~ Holiday's in St. Mungo's

I woke up groaning.

"Ah, you're awake!" said a voice I didn't recognize.

"Where am I?" I asked.

"St. Mungo's" The voice replied.

I opened my eyes, and saw a young man with brown hair standing over me. "You had a few broken ribs, a broken nose, and some bruises and cuts. We patched you up and you'll be just fine! You need to stay here for a few days before we can let you go though." He smiled at me. "I'm Healer Kirk, your boyfriend brought you in looking *terrified.* But it was nothing we couldn't fix."

"I don't have a boyfriend." I replied, confused.

He raised his eyebrows at me. "Oh sorry, he just seemed crazy worried, so I assumed. He has red hair, pretty tall, some freckles."

"Oh that's my good friend." I said.

He nodded. "Right, well he also said that before you passed out, you mentioned that your dad did this to you. What happened?"

My eyes brimmed with tears. "We had this argument, and then he started to hit me and-"

Thankfully, Healer Kirk didn't ask more questions. "It's alright darling, all I need to know is his name ok?"

I sighed, then gave him my dad's name. Kirk wrote it down, then started walking towards the door. "Don't worry Fawn, you'll be out of here before Christmas!"

When he opened the door, a gang of red head's burst into the room. Charlie and Bill rushed over first. Charlie flung himself on me, tears

on his face while Bill sat next to me.

"Charlie, don't cry," I rubbed his back.

He pulled away from me and wiped his eyes, grinning at me. "I'm glad you're alright."

Bill looked at me, his face stark white.

"Bill, you look like you've seen a ghost!" I joked.

He rubbed his face. "I was just so worried about you, you looked.....really bad."

"Are you alright dear?" a short, plump woman with red hair walked over and took my hand in hers.

"Yes I'm much better, thanks Mrs. Weasley" I said smiling.

A small crowd of younger children pushed themselves to the front. Bill introduced me to them.

"That's Percy," he pointed to a boy with glasses, he looked around 9 years old.

"Those are the twins, Fred and George,"

The two identical twins smiled at me, maybe 7 years.

"That's Ron, and that's Ginny. Ron's a year older than Gin,"

Ron looked around 5 so Ginny was probably 4. Ron and Ginny climbed onto my bed and came to sit on either side of me.

"Are you ok?" Ginny asked, holding my hand with her tiny one.

I smiled at her. "Yeah I am."

After a while, Mrs. Weasley started rounding her children up. "Alright children, Fawn need to sleep! We will come visit her tomorrow." She turned to me. "By the way dear, you will be living with us from now on."

"Really?" I asked, my eyes widening.

Mrs. Weasley gave me a weird look. "Of course! There is no way you're going back to that *awful* home. It's a good thing you brought your trunk and owl!"

They all left, except for Bill. He was still sitting and staring at me. "So what happened?"

I quickly told him everything and he looked grim. "Wow, If I ever see your dad...."

"You will stay *away* from him." I said firmly.

Bill looked at me for a few seconds before leaning down, and before I could register what was happening, he had pressed his lips against mine. His lips were soft and they tasted like honey. He quickly drew back, his eyes widening. "Oh shit, I'm sorry I didn't-"

But I cut him off by grabbing his face and bringing it to mine again, kissing him softly. He put his hand on my cheek and smiled against my lips.

"Oh *not* your boyfriend? What a little liar you are Starling."

We turned to see Healer Kirk standing there chuckling. "Sorry for interrupting, I just need to give Fawn this potion." he handed me a glass of a weird smelling liquid.

"Do I have to?" I whined.

Kirk raised his eyebrows and I sighed, pinching my nose and drinking the potion. I gagged and handed the glass back to the Healer.

When Kirk eft, Bill turned to me. I suddenly left a little sleepy. "I need to sleep," I said.

Bill nodded. "Alright, is there anything you need?"

I thought for a moment. "When you visit me tomorrow, can you bring my knitting needles and yarn? It's in my trunk."

Bill smiled. "Of course darling," he kissed my forehead then my lips. "Goodnight Fawn,"

"Goodnight Bill."

~ ~ ~

HEHEH finally some Fawn and Bill action. I was so exited writing this chapter.

~9~ Best Christmas Ever

I spent my days at St. Mungo's playing with the Weasley kids (except Percy, he's pretty boring) and knitting. Bill would lie down next to me with his head buried into my my neck as we talked. Talked about Hogwarts, talked about his family, talked about anything. The Weasley's were quite the family.

Mr. Weasley came to visit and was very nice. He works at the Ministry and loves anything to do with muggles.

Mrs. Weasley is a stay at home Mum who has to take care of all the kids. *Seven kids!* Five when Bill and Charlie were at Hogwarts.

Percy, the third oldest, was a smartass. He was pretty nice but spent most of his time visiting me talking about his future. It was great that he already knew what he wanted to do at such a young age, but it was *all* he ever talked about.

Fred and George. *Oh. My. Merlin*. Where do I begin. They are absolute mad lads. And I love them for that. Those two seven year old's drive Mr. and Mrs. Weasley up the wall. They constantly pull pranks, and jokes. They run around St. Mungo's and the Healers get so annoyed.
Except Healer Kirk, he loves them just as much as I do. He says they make things more fun.
Bill told me that this is their tame side, but at home they're even worse.

Ron and Ginny are the youngest two. Ron is 5 and Ginny is 4. They are the cutest kids. They like to snuggle up to me while I tell them about Hogwarts and all the cool magic and animals there are there. They love listening to my stories about my crazy times with Hagrid.

Since I could only sit in bed and do nothing else, I had the time to finish all my knitting gifts.
I even made stuff for the rest of the Weasley's!

Christmas Eve was the day I got to go to The Burrow and I was really exited. When it finally rolled around, Kirk came to check on me and make sure I was completely healed. Mr. Weasley came to take me home. We Apparated to The Burrow and when we walked in, I was attacked by everyone. Charlie, the twins, Ron and Ginny tackled me to the ground while their parents tried to calm them down. Percy just gave me a small hug when I stood up.

"Where's Bill?" I asked, slightly disappointed he was not there.

Mrs. Weasley smiled at me. "He doesn't know you're here, he's still upstairs sleeping. We made him think your coming home tomorrow, go surprise him!" she led me to his room.

I approached the bed he was sleeping in. He looked so peaceful, his mouth slightly open, his hair messy and popping out from underneath the blankets.

I shook him awake and he groaned turning to look at me. "Mum, not -FAWN!" He grabbed me and pulled me onto his bed, hugging me tightly. "I thought you were coming tomorrow!"

"Nope, it was a surprise," I replied, grinning.

He pulled away from me, grabbed my face and smashed his lips into mine. "I'm so glad your ok." he mumbled against my lips.

The rest of the day passed with everyone trying to get me to do something with them.

"Come play Quidditch with me!" Charlie cried.

"No can you teach me some History of magic?" Percy pleaded.

"We want to pull pranks with her!." The twins yelled.

"Tell me and Ron a storyyyy," Ginny whined.

"Pleaseeeeee!" said Ron, hugging my legs.

I held up a hand. "How about we all take turns?"

So that's what we did. At the end of the day, I was laying with Bill on his bed, our hands entwined together.

"I love watching you with my family, they all really love you," he said, while stroking my hair.

I smiled and closed my eyes. "They're wonderful, you have a beautiful family."

The next morning was Christmas. Ginny and I bounded down the stairs to see everyone sitting at the table. I tossed everyone their gifts.

"Oh you didn't have to..." Percy said blushing.

I waved a hand. "It's the least I could do."

Everyone opened my gifts for them. I made hats for Bill, Charlie, Ron and Ginny. I made gloves for Percy (he kept complaining about his old ripped pair) and I made matching scarves for Fred and George. I made a hat and scarf set for Mrs. Weasley and a glove and scarf set for Mr. Weasley. They loved them.

Mrs. Weasley patted my cheek and out more food onto my plate. Mr. Weasley squeezed my shoulder. Percy hugged me. Fred and George all but pounced on me, telling me how much they loved the scarves. And Bill kissed my cheek while Charlie cried with happiness. Ron and Ginny wore their hats happily the entire day, even in the bath and I had overheard Mrs. Weasley yelling at them

Everyone came to me and thanked me. Then it was time for gifts from them.

Mrs. Weasley made me a knitted purple jumper with a large black *F* on the front. Charlie got me a new pair of quidditch gloves and Bill got me a beautiful necklace with a small beater bat on it. I loved all the gifts and thanked them, tears springing in my eyes.

Owl post had come the night before and I got makeup from Rue, a book about exotic magical creatures from Damon, a bracelet from Lucas and perfume from Finley.

That night, Ron and Ginny wanted me to read them a bedtime story. I sat on the bed between them while they rested their heads on my shoulders. By the time I finished the book they were both fast sleep. Bill walked in and smiled at the scene, before coming over and sleeping with us.

~ ~ ~

On the last day of the winter break, Bill and I decided to take a small walk around the backyard and hangout in the snow for a bit. I put on my hat and gloves and zipped up my jacket all the way up to my chin. We walked hand in hand, not saying anything. We were just enjoying each others company.

"You know, this is the first time I'm actually disappointed that break is over," I said.

"Yeah?" Bill said.

I nodded. "Mhm, I never liked staying at home. But here.... it's all so wonderful and loving,"

Bill stopped walking and looked at me. "I'm just glad your here,"

And he leaned down to kiss me.

~10~ Four years later.

Four Years Later

Over the last four years, things have been great between Bill and I. We all passed our O.W.L's in fifth year, and have decided on our jobs. I really wanted to teach here at Hogwarts, but if that couldn't happen, I'd go for being a Healer at St. Mungo's. And Bill had decided on being a
Curse-Breaker at Gringotts.

When our N.E.W.T's came up, we studied like mad. When me, Bill, Lucas and Finley were in seventh year, Charlie, Rue and Damon were in fifth, so they were also studying a lot for their O.W.L.'s.

Bill and I both became Prefects in fifth year and Head girl and boy in seventh. Bill quit the Quidditch team in seventh year so that he could focus more on school, but I still managed to juggle Quidditch, school and Head girl duties. Lucas had tried out for the team after Bill quit and was made the new Keeper. Percy was now in his second year at Hogwarts. Oh, and Charlie finally had the guts to tell Rue he liked her in their fourth year and they've been dating since then.
Damon, Lucas and Finley didn't bother with relationships.

We were now at the end of year feast. I was looking around, feeling a flicker of sadness as I realized that I wouldn't be coming back to Hogwarts anymore. I looked at Charlie, Rue and Damon and bit my lip, thinking about how I won't be seeing them everyday. I noticed that Bill, Lucas and Finley had the same expressions of both happiness and sadness as me.

The next morning, I had grabbed my trunk, broom and my owl cage and went downstairs to the common room. I stood next to Bill, Lucas and Finley.

"Well," I said. "This is it."

Bill sighed, draping his arm around my shoulder. "Last time we will be in here."

Lucas looked around. "Never thought I'd be depressed about leaving school"

"Same here," Finley said.

Charlie, Rue and Damon came downstairs with their stuff and we went to the Hogwarts train. We found a compartment and sat down, talking and laughing. We arrived at the platform and Bill and I stood facing our friends. I hugged them all tightly, fighting the tears that were about to fall.

"Fawn, just because you're leaving school doesn't mean we can't write to each other anymore." Rue said, although she also had tears in her eyes.

After we bade our watery goodbyes, Mr. Weasley came and Bill, Charlie, Percy and I apparated to The Burrow. When we all walked though the door, Fred, George, Ron and Ginny ran towards Bill, Charlie, Percy and I, tackling us to the ground. I smiled.

"I've missed you all so much!" I said while ruffling Ron's hair.

During the month of July, Bill had managed to get a job at Gringotts bank as a Curse-Breaker. We were all super happy for him but I was still not sure with what I would do. I had written to Professor Dumbledore about me becoming a Professor at Hogwarts, but had not received a reply yet. One day in August, we heard the doorbell ring. I was in the room that I shared with Ginny. Ginny was playing with my hair, when Mrs. Weasley poked her head through the door.

"Fawn, Professor Dumbledore is here to see you."

I looked around with wide eyes. "Dumbledore?!"

She shrugged and left.

Ginny reached up and grabbed my hand. "Are you in trouble?"

I smiled. "I don't think so."

I walked to the living room where Dumbledore was sitting, humming to himself quietly. He smiled when he saw me. "Ah, Miss. Starling!"

"Professor Dumbledore, what brings you here?" I asked politely while sitting across from him.

He smiled. "Professor McGonagall told me you want to be a teacher at Hogwarts, correct?"

I sat up straighter. "Yes sir!"

He leaned back. "Well, I'm very pleased to inform you that you can start teaching History of Magic starting next year!"

My eyes widened. "Really? Oh this is great!"

Dumbledore nodded. "Yes, we have to wait until next year as you have to be 19 to start teaching."

I could barely contain my excitement. "I can't believe it! I just-*wow!*"

Dumbledore chuckled. "What will you be doing during the next year?"

I thought for a moment. "A Healer. I have all the O.W.L's and N.E.W.T's I need to become one."

He nodded and got up. "I wish you the best of luck with that Miss. Starling, and I look forward to having you teach next year."

He left the Burrow and I squealed with excitement. Everyone came rushing in.

"What's wrong?" Percy asked.

"I CAN TEACH AT HOGWARTS NEXT YEAR!!!!" I yelled.

Everyone clapped and cheered and ran to hug me.

"Oh congratulations Fawn! We will have a special dinner tonight to celebrate." said Mrs. Weasley, bustling to the kitchen to start dinner.

I grinned. I couldn't wait for Bill to come back from work so that I could tell him the good news.

Finally, at the end of the day, Bill and Mr. Weasley came back from work. When Bill walked through the door, I ran at him and threw my arms around him.

"I can start teaching at Hogwarts next year!" I cried happily.

Bill spun me around and Mr. Weasley chuckled.

"I'm so proud of you my little dove," Bill whispered into my hair. I pulled away from him and grinned, but although he was smiling too, his eyes looked sad.

"Is everything ok?" I asked, touching his cheek.

He smiled wider. "Of course! I'm just a bit tired."

After dinner, we were all in the living room. Charlie was laying down with his his head on my lap and reading a book while the twins and Percy played Exploding Snap. Ron and Ginny were playing with Percy's rat Scabbers, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley were sitting close together and talking while Bill sat alone, staring at his hands on his lap.

I poked Charlie's head. "What's up with Bill?" I whispered.

He put his book down and and looked at me. "I don't know," he said, although he awkwardly looked away, as if he *did* know.

Everyone started going to bed, Mrs. Weasley gave me a look while passing, squeezing my shoulder. I was confused, and was sure that she knew something that I didn't know about. I got up to go to bed but Bill held me back. "Fawn."

I looked at him. "Yes Bill?"

He scratched the back of his neck. "Well, I've been promoted....."

My eyes widened. "What! That's amazing! I'm so-"

"I'll have to live in Egypt." he blurted out.

My heart dropped. I was so happy that he was promoted. But he would have to *leave*. Leave England. Leave his family. Leave his friends. Leave *me*.

"That's wonderful though!" I forced a smile "You're *promoted!"*

He pressed his lips in a smile. "Yeah..."

I played with his hair. "Well, It's fine. It's fine, we will keep in touch. Right?"

He paused, looking at me.

I felt my breath hitch. "What's wrong Bill?'

Bill closed his eyes. When he opened them again, they were dark with sadness. He heaved a sigh before saying

"We need to break up."

~11~ A Broken Heart

My eyes widened. "Break up? Why? What did I do?"

Bill shook his head. "You didn't do anything wrong, I promise."

I glared at him. "Then what's the problem?"

He stepped away from me. "I'm going to live in Egypt." he said simply, as if that answered all of my questions.

I crossed my arms across my chest. "What does that have to do with us breaking up?"

"Well," Bill started slowly. "I won't be seeing you anymore."

"So?" I said waving my arms around. "We can still owl each other! And I can Apparate to Egypt! We can do long distance!"

Bill shook his head. "It will be too difficult Fawn, I mean, only God knows when I'll be coming back! And you're going to start working too! It'll be distracting."

"Distracting?" I said angrily. "I'm not going to be distracted! Oh my god there's another woman involved isn't there."

Bill let out an agitated sigh. "No there is not another woman. It's just-, I don't expect you to understand."

"Then help me!" I said desperately, grabbing the front of his Gringotts robes. "Help me understand why we can't be together!"

He looked down at my face. "I just can't Fawn," he said, pulling away from my grasp and walking up the stairs.

"When do you leave?" I choked out.

He turned back. "Tomorrow morning,"

My heart clenched. "Is this your final word? We're breaking up? Without you fully explaining why?"

He looked at me. "Yes,"

And with that, he went up the stairs.

The next morning, I walked down to the kitchen feeling depressed. I walked into the kitchen and looked around. Mrs. Weasley was frying eggs. Mr. Weasley, Charlie, Percy, Fred, George, Ron and Ginny were at the table waiting for breakfast.

"Where's Bill?" I asked.

Mrs. Weasley looked at me, with a confused expression on her face. "He already left for Egypt."

Mr. Weasley raised his eyebrows. "Bill told us that he already told you a private goodbye this morning, before leaving."

I felt tears brim into my eyes, and without a word I ran out of the kitchen and into the garden. I sat down at the porch, sobbing. I couldn't believe it. He just *left*, without a word. And he *lied* to his family saying he said goodbye to me.

I felt a hand on my shoulder. "Fawn?"

I turned away. "Leave me alone Charlie."

"Bill told me to give you this." he placed a letter on my lap and left.

Wiping my tears, I opened the letter and started reading.

Dear Fawn,

By the time you read this, I'll already be in Egypt. I'm sorry for breaking up with you. Lucas, Finley and Damon told me it was an idiotic idea but I didn't listen. I hurt you, and that hurt me. Knowing that I broke your heart is eating me alive right now. But the reason I broke up with you is because I'll be living in Egypt, and I don't want your options to be limited. We can't physically be there for each other anymore. We can't see each other like we used to. You need someone that can be there for

you whenever you need them. You need someone that won't be dumb enough to hurt you, like I was. I'm sure you will meet another man that can do all that for you.

I still love you tons,
Bill

I finished reading the letter and cried harder. Bill was right, he was dumb to break up with me. What's he playing at? Thinking I'll just run off with someone else.

I was sulking around the house for the next few days. I had told everyone exactly what happened after they had pestered me endlessly. Mrs. Weasley was so angry at Bill, and she kept saying that when he came back to visit, she would hex him back to Egypt.

Rue, Damon, Lucas and Finley had come to visit me and they were all also really mad at him.

Rue banged her fist on the table. "I'm going to kill him!"

Charlie put a soothing hand on her shoulder. "Calm down love."

She shook her head. "No, I'll go to his place in Egypt and fucking kill him."

Finley leaned against his chair. "I told him he was dumb, I already told him. But did perfect Mr. Head Boy listen? Nope"

Damon sighed. "I can't believe him honestly."

Lucas nodded. "Yep, and you won't believe what happened!"

Charlie looked at him. "What?"

"Well," Lucas began. "I was telling him he was being stupid, y'know, about the whole *She'll probably meet someone else* and I was like *Dude, I know Fawn, she's not like that*. Then he got mad and accused us of sneaking around together."

I stood up. "WHAT!?"

Lucas sighed. "I know. I told him he was being ridiculous, and that the reason I know you're not like that is because you and we have been best friends for the past *four years!* So yeah, Bill thought you and I were having a fling behind his back. I finally convinced him that we weren't but he was still mad at me."

I got up and stomped towards the stairs.

"Where are you going?" Rue called out.

"To write a letter!" I called back.

I sat down in my room, took out a piece of parchment and a quill, and began writing.

Dear Bill,

I hope you are enjoying yourself in Egypt. Have you met any pretty witches there yet? I'm just writing to let you know that you're a complete arse. How dare you accuse me of cheating on you with Lucas! Or anyone for that matter. We've been dating for four years! Do you not know me at all? You really think I'd have a fling with someone? Let alone our best friend? Honestly, I'm done with your bullshit. You better run if you see Rue by the way, she told me she's going to kill you when she sees you. Your mother also said that when you come back, she will hex you back to Egypt.

Next time I see you, I'll shove your wand up where the sun never shines,
Fawn

I smiled at my letter. I felt a lot better writing it, and so I tied it to my owl Snowy's leg and told her it was for Bill, and I watched her fly off into the distance.

~12~ Another Four Years Later

Well, It's been another four years. Let me tell you a bit about it as it's been one hell of a ride.

When Bill, Lucas, Finley and I had graduated, I got a job as a Healer for a year as Bill went to work in Egypt. Lucas, Finley and Damon became Aurors at the Ministry of Magic while Charlie and Rue moved to Romania to work as Dragonologists.

I've been teaching History of Magic at Hogwarts for the last three years which has been amazing. Fred and George had started school a few years ago and have been causing so much trouble. I had to give them detention almost every single day, along with their best friend Lee Jordan.
Ron had also started school and was now going into his third year, while the twins were going into their 5th, Ginny her 2nd and Percy his 7th. Percy just got appointed Head Boy which he happily talked about with me.

Even though I was perfectly content to live by myself, Mrs. Weasley insisted I stay with them, since I only had to stay with them during the summer and winter holidays.

Over the last four years, Bill still hadn't bothered to owl me once. However, he was telling everyone else to talk to me for him. He told Charlie to tell me that Bill still loved me and he told the twins to tell me that he missed me a lot. I would always get really annoyed with the fact that he didn't owl me himself.

Ron had become best friends with the famous Harry Potter, along with another bright girl Hermione Granger. Those three caused a lot of trouble during their first two years, both of them involving Voldemort.

During the summer, the Weasley's had gone to Egypt to visit Bill. I was, of course, invited, but I declined. I couldn't see Bill after four years. I still loved him and it hurt.

Now, we were on the Hogwarts Express for another year at Hogwarts. The notorious killer Sirius Black had just escaped Azkaban, and so all the parents were telling their children to be careful.

I walked onto the train, heaving my trunk. I waved to the students who greeted me. I found a compartment with only one person inside it.

"Er, excuse me do you mind if I sit here?" I asked.

The figure had their jacket pulled up to their face, so I couldn't see the mans face. But he looked like he was sleeping, so as quietly as I could, I put my trunk inside and sat down. The sliding door opened and Ron, Harry and Hermione slipped in.

"I wonder who that is." said Ron, sitting down.

"That's Professor R. J. Lupin," Hermione replied.

"How do you know?" asked Ron narrowing his eyes.

"It says so on his trunk."

I looked up and sure enough, there was the name on the mans trunk.

"Wonder what he's going to teach." Ron said, holding his pet rat Scabbers.

"Probably Defence Against the Dark Arts." I said, moving my bag so that Harry could sit down beside me. "It's the only spot open."

"Well, he better be up for it. He looks like one simple hex could finish him off." Ron said.

Hermione glared at him while I looked at the man, Lupin, judging by his trunk. He did look really thin and slightly ill.

Harry started telling Ron and Hermione about how Mr. Weasley and the Minister of Magic, Fudge, had told him how Sirius Black was coming after him.

"Don't do anything stupid Harry," I said.

Harry groaned. "I'll try."

After a while, the train shook a bit and stopped.

"Finally," said Ron eagerly.

"We can't be there yet," Hermione said, looking at her watch.

"The train probably broke down." I said, but I took out out my wand just in case.

The lights went out, leaving us in the darkness. I heard Harry swearing under his breath. The sliding door opened and I heard Neville and Ginny come in.

"What's going on?"

"What are you guys doing?"

"Ow that's my foot!"

"Wait don't sit on Crookshanks!"

"Kids stop talking-" I tried to say when I heard a hoarse voice say "Quite!"

I lit my wand to make some light and saw that Lupin had woken up and was now standing beside me with his own wand drawn out.

The door opened once more and a hooded figure slid in. It was a Dementor. I gulped.

"Sirius Black is not here." Lupin said clearly.

The Dementor didn't leave. It went closer to harry.

"Expecto patronum!" Lupin and I both yelled.

A wolf burst out of his wand while a seal burst out of mine, sending the Dementors away.

Harry had fainted and Lupin and I rushed to him, trying to wake him up.

Harry woke up looking confused. "Who was screaming? Was it you Hermione?'

I looked at him worried. "Harry, darling, no one was screaming."

Lupin broke off pieces of chocolate and handed them to everyone, including me. "Eat, it'll help you feel better."

Hermione spoke up. "What were those Dementors doing here?"

"Looking for Black." I said grimly.

Lupin smiled. "I'll just go speak to the train conductor,"

"I'll come with you." I said.

We both set off down the train.

"I'm Fawn Starling, I'm the History of Magic professor." I said, sticking out my hand.

"Remus Lupin, the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher." he shook my hand.

Remus looked like he wasn't too much older than me, maybe ten years older or so, which would make him in his early thirties. But his brown hair was already streaked with grey and his eyes had bags under them. He looked pretty ill, but I decided it would be too rude to ask anything, considering the fact that we only just met. After we went to talk to the train conductor, the train started to move.

Once we arrived at Hogwarts, Remus and I went to the Great Hall, which was still empty except for the other professors.

"Minnie!" I said happily as I strode over to the teachers table.

Minerva McGonagall smiled and squeezed my arm. "Hello Fawn,"

I sat next to Hagrid while Remus sat on my other side. The students started filing in and finally the sorting started. Once the sorting and dinner finished, Professor Dumbledore stood up.

"Welcome to another year at Hogwarts!" he said.

He reminded everyone about the rules, looking over to Fred and George when he mentioned that the Forbidden Forest was still off limits. Then he spoke about Sirius Black and how the Dementors will be patrolling around the castle.

"And now I would like to introduce our new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, Professor Lupin!"

Remus stood up awkwardly and took a little bow. I noticed that Snape was looking at Remus with pure fury in his eyes. I knew that Snape had always wanted the DATDA spot but Dumbledore never gave it to him, but it looked like he had something personal with Remus becoming the teacher.

"And I would also like to announce that it is most unfortunate that Professor Kettleburn, our Care of Magical Creatures teacher, has decided to retire. But I am most pleased to announce that Rubeus Hagrid will be the new professor!"

That night, I went to my sleeping chambers and saw that an owl was waiting for me, standing on the window sill. I opened my window and let her in.

"I wonder who this is from," I said to myself.

It was from Charlie.

Dear Fawn
I hope you have a great teaching year. Try not to give the twins too many detentions all right? Oh, and also Bill sent me a letter and told me to tell you he misses you dearly and he still loves you and and regrets what he did deeply.

I made a sound of anger, and took a few deep breaths to calm myself before reading.

Don't worry though, Rue and I sent back a Howler! We told him that if he wants to tell you, he can tell you this himself and that he can suck his regret if he's not going to bother talking to you. Love you and miss you lot's,
Charlie

PS. I'm planning on proposing to Rue soon. Don't tell her or anyone else, you're the only one that knows.

I was so happy about Charlie proposing to Rue. I couldn't wait for him to pop the question. I quickly wrote back telling him I appreciated them sending Bill that Howler and also congratulating him on his decision to propose to Rue

After sending the letter, I quickly fell into a deep sleep.

~13~ Sirius Black

During the course of the term, I had gotten pretty close with Remus Lupin. He was a nice man, and it was easy to connect with him. The weeks flew by in a flash and soon it was October 31, Halloween. After the usual Halloween feast, everyone was leaving the great hall. I was walking through the halls with Remus, chatting about our classes when we saw Dumbledore hurrying towards us with a flood of students behind him, all looking fearful.

"What's going on Professor?" I asked.

Dumbledore looked at me grimly. "Sirius Black attacked the fat lady's portrait."

I gasped and Remus sucked in a sharp breath.

Dumbledore sighed and continued. "The students will be sleeping in the great Hall tonight. Fawn, Remus, I would like both of you to help patrol the castle."

Remus nodded. "Of course sir."

~ ~ ~

A few weeks later, I heard a knock at my office door.

"Come in!" I called.

The door opened and Remus walked in. "Good afternoon Fawn."

"So formal." I laughed, not taking my eyes off of the essays I was marking.

He perched himself at the edge of my desk. "I loved History of Magic when I was a student."

I grinned up at him. "Oh yeah?"

He nodded. "I bet you're more interesting than Professor Binns."

I smirked. "The only downfall is that I actually notice when people aren't paying attention in class."

It went silent for a few moments, the only sound coming from the scratching of my quill on the parchment paper.

"You married?" I asked out of boredom.

"No." he replied, looking slightly uncomfortable.

"Dating? In love? Engaged?"

"No, no, and no."

"Why?" I asked. "You're old."

Remus chuckled. "Personal reasons."

I shrugged. "I won't bug you to tell me."

"What about you?" he pushed my shoulder slightly.

"What about me?" I played dumb.

"Fawn...."

I leaned back in my chair and looked up at him. "I had someone. We dated for about eight years, before he broke up with me because he didn't want to deal with a long distance relationship."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"It's okay. I'm over it." I lied.

~ ~ ~

The rest of the year passed by in a blur.

There was only a few days left for the schoolyear, so I decided to go to Remus' office and hangout with him for a bit. But when I went to his office, I saw that the door was slightly ajar and the room was empty. There was nothing on the table except for a map. I looked closely and saw my name, which was marked that I was in Remus' office.

"Woah, cool." I whispered.

I kept reading the map, looking at where everyone was, but my heart stopped when I noticed the names that were in the Shrieking Shack.

Remus, Harry, Ron, Hermione and Snape. But there were two other names that freaked me out.

Sirius Black and Peter Pettigrew.

I burst out of the room and ran to the shack. With my wand, I made a branch float and press on the tree stump, causing the Whomping Willow to stop thrashing it's branches. I quickly ran through the tunnel and ran up a staircase. I burst through the door with my wand raised.

With my loud and sudden entrance, everyone looked over at me with shock. I stared at the scene, and everyone stared back. Ron and Hermione were sitting together on the floor, huddled in a corner. Ron was clutching his leg while Harry, Remus and Sirius Black were standing in the middle of the room, above a small, ratty looking man I've never seen before.

I raised my wand to Black. "Back away from Harry," I growled, but Harry stopped me.

"No it's alright! He's alright! Don't!"

I kept my wand raised. "What? But he's here to kill you!"

Harry shook his head. "No he's here to kill Pettigrew, Pettigrew framed Sirius. Pettigrew is the real criminal. He's also the one who sold my parents out to Voldemort."

I noticed that Snape was laying in the floor, unconscious. "Wha-?"

Remus placed a hand on my arm. "I'll explain everything later."

Pettigrew crawled towards me. "Fawn! Fawn, please don't let them hurt me."

I backed away. "How do you know my name?" I demanded.

"Fawn, It's me. Scabbers."

I looked over at Ron, who nodded at me.

"It is," he said with disgust. "He's an Animagus. Pretended to be our pet rat so that he could hide from Black."

I looked back at Pettigrew, feeling horror dawn over me as I thought of the time I let Scabbers sleep on my pillow when young Percy had asked me to watch over Scabbers. Pettigrew reached out a hand and grasped the bottom of my shirt.

"Fawn, please. You know me. You helped Percy and Ron take care of me. You and Bill, you both made a wonderful couple."

I snarled. "You just said it. We *made* a wonderful couple. Past tense. Now get off me you creep!" I kicked him away from me.

Remus grabbed Pettigrew and Sirius made Snape float after us. I helped Hermione hold Ron up.

"So, what the hell happened?" I asked.

Hermione quickly explained everything.

"Wow, that's just crazy." I was at a loss for words.

We emerged from the Whomping Willow just as Remus let go of Pettigrew and let out a groan of pain.

"Remus are you alright?" I asked going forwards, but harry held me back.

"Oh no it's a full moon!" squealed Hermione.

"What? So?" I said.

But my question was answered when Remus started changing. His body was growing and getting hairy.

Remus is a werewolf.

Remus, now fully transformed, growled at us. Pettigrew grabbed a wand and with a bang, Sirius and Harry were knocked backwards before Pettigrew turned into a rat and scurried away.

"No he's getting away!" I exclaimed.

I heard someone yelling my name and turned around just in time to see Remus standing right in front of me, and then everything went black

~14~ Seeing Bill

I woke up with a groan.

"Nice of you to join us," said a voice.

I looked over to see Remus sitting next to my bed.

"How long have I been out for?" I asked. "Where am I?"

He pursed his lips. "You've been out for almost two days. And you're in the Hospital Wing."

I looked around and sure enough, I was in the Hospital Wing.

"What happened?" I asked him.

Remus looked away. "While I was in my werewolf form, I attacked you."

"Oh,"

He looked back to me. "I'm so sorry, I really didn't mean to," he stopped and looked down at his hands. "I'm a monster."

I reached out and put my hand on top of his. "Remus, You are not a monster. I promise. It wasn't your fault."

He smiled grimly. "That's not what the parents think."

"What do you mean?"

He sighed. "Someone 'accidentally' let it slip that I'm a werewolf and that I attacked you. I got sacked. today"

My eyes widened. "What? But the students love you! Everyone said you're the best Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher."

He shrugged. "Well, the parents don't agree."

"Who let it slip?" I asked.

"Severus Snape,"

I felt anger lick at my heart. "Ugh, that long nosed git."

Remus chuckled.

"What happened to the others?" I asked.

Remus smiled. "Everyone is alright, Sirius managed to escape, with the help of Harry and Hermione."

I grinned. "Thank god."

A few days later, it was time to go back home. When we arrived at the Burrow, Mrs. Weasley gave me a bone-crushing hug. "Oh darling I heard what happened are you alright?"

I smiled. "Perfectly fine."

That evening, Mr. Weasley announced that he had gotten tickets to the Quidditch World cup. Everyone was super exited, except for Percy.

"I just don't see the point in Quidditch," Percy was telling me. We were both the only ones in the living room that night. I was knitting while he was writing a report for the ministry. Percy had become the personal assistant of Barty Crouch Sr.

"It's so much fun!" I said. "I loved playing it when I was on school."

Percy shrugged. "I've never found it interesting."

"That's because you're *boringggggg."* I sang out as Percy chuckled slightly.

A few days later, Mrs. Weasley announced that Bill, Charlie and Rue were coming over that night to spend the rest of the summer with us.

"Bill?" I said.

Mrs. Weasley smiled. "I know dear, but just try to give him a chance alright? It's been five years!"

I sighed. It was going to be a *long* summer.

When Bill, Charlie and Rue arrived, Rue practically flew at me. "OMG FAWN I'VE MISSED YOU SO FREAKING MUCH!"

I hugged her. "I'VE MISSED YOU TOO RUE!"

"Why are you two yelling? You guys are literally right in front of each other!" Charlie said, laughing as we walked over to us.

"Come here 'lil bro." I scooped Charlie into my arms, his red hair tickling my chin. He was still a head shorter than me. "Charlie, darling, you need to start growing."

He chuckled. "Or maybe you need to start shrinking."

I swatted his arm while Rue snorted with laughter. I looked up to see Bill and my heart quickened. Bill looked a little different. His hair was much longer than before, and he had a fang earring on one ear. He had grown taller. Even though he was skinny, he now had a muscular build. If it was even possible, he was probably even more handsome than last time I'd seen him.

"Er, hi." he said, smiling awkwardly at me.

I narrowed my eyes. "It's been five years and the only thing you have to say is *hi?"*

He looked taken aback. "Well-I, What am I supposed to say?"

I glared at him. "I don't know maybe all the things you've been telling everyone to tell me? Or was that all bullshit?"

Without waiting for his response, I turned on my heels and stomped out of the room. Dinner that night was an awkward time. Everyone kept looking between Bill and I. We were both trying to avoid each other as much as possible.

The next morning I woke up early. I went to the kitchen to find

Charlie, Rue and Bill already there, with coffees in their hands.

"Here I made you a cup." said Rue, pushing a mug towards me.

"Thanks," I said, sitting on the kitchen counter.

"So tell us, anything new at Hogwarts?" Charlie asked.

I shook my head. "No, same old same old."

I noticed Bill was staring at me, his ears turning red, and I thought of an idea. I smirked and Rue noticed because she raised her eyebrows as if to say *uh oh what are you going to do?*

I looked back at her as if to say *Don't worry just play along.*

I took a sip of my coffee before saying "Oh yeah, there was a really cute professor last year."

Charlie's eyes widened and Bill choked on his coffee. Rue placed her hand on her mouth and tried to stop laughing.

"Who was it?" she asked.

"Remus Lupin."

"The werewolf?" Charlie said.

"Don't say it like that Charlie, he's a wonderful person. Werewolf or not."

Bill stood up angrily and left the kitchen. I broke down laughing, Rue joining in.

"What on earth-" Charlie said, looking between the two of us.

Rue looked at me. "Wait do you *actually* like this Remus guy?"

I shook my head. "No, he *is* actually really cute. But I have no interest in him."

Charlie raised an eyebrow. "Did you only say that to make Bill jealous?"

I nodded. "Did it work?"

Just then we all heard someone yelling out in anger and Mrs. Weasley shouting "BILL WHAT ARE YOU DOING STOP KICKING THINGS!"

We all snorted with laughter. "Pretty sure it worked,"

~15~ Quidditch World Cup

Over the course of the summer, Harry and Hermione came over and it was soon the day of the Quidditch World Cup. Charlie, Rue, Bill, Percy and I apparated to the location while Mr. Weasley took Ron, Fred, George, Ginny, Harry and Hermione by a portkey, since they were all too young to Apparate.

After the match finished we were back in the tent we were staying in. Ron was standing on a chair, raving about Viktor Krum.

"He's more than an athlete! He's an artist!" he said as Fred and George draped their Irish flag over Ron and kept saying "dumb Krum"

"I think you're in love Ron," Ginny said.

"Shut up," he retorted

"Viktor I love you," sang Fred

"Viktor I doooo," continued George.

"When we're apart my heart beats only for youuuu!" Harry, Rue and I sang together while Ginny, Charlie and Bill laughed. Percy however, was standing to the side, watching quietly with an amused smiled on his face.

"Sounds like the Irish have got their pride on," said Fred, after hearing loud yells.

Mr. Weasley looked out of the tent then looked back at us. "That's not the Irish, everyone grab your bags we need to go!"

No one argued or asked what was going one. Mr. Weasley looked panicked and that was enough to get everyone going.

Everyone grabbed onto each other and we rushed outside. I kept my wand out. There were Death Eaters making people flop in the air

like dolls. I felt sick to my stomach watching. I suddenly realized Harry wasn't with us anymore.

"Harry!" I called out.

I found him looking around panicked. I quickly rushed to him, ignoring Bill's loud calls.

"FAWN WHERE ARE YOU GOING?"

Just as I reached Harry, I felt someone hit the back of my head and all went black.

~ ~ ~

I woke up to see a blurry group of people standing over me.

"What happened?" I asked.

My vision came into focus and I saw who was standing over me. All the Weasley's, along with Rue, Harry and Hermione.

"Someone thought you were trying to attack Harry and they hit you." said Rue, trying not to laugh. "Harry yelled at them and told them you were his friend and they just ran off."

"Stop laughing!" I said.

She took a deep breath. "Well sorry, now that I know your alright, it's just too funny! Anyway, we're back at the Burrow. Also, people kept stepping over you because they couldn't see you."

I groaned. "Is that why I feel like I'm dying?"

"Yes, you have some bruised ribs." Charlie said. "Nothing broken though."

"Why would you do that?" A voice suddenly spoke out angrily.

I looked over to see Bill standing with his arms crossed. Looking both angry and scared.

"To help Harry!" I said.

He narrowed his eyes. "You could've been killed Fawn!"

"Yea as if you'd care if that happened." I snapped.

Silence.

Mrs. Weasley cleared her throat. "Let's all go make dinner shall we? I could use the help this time!"

Everyone awkwardly left, leaving me with Bill. We started at each other angrily.

"Of course I would care that's why I was so scared!" he said, coming closer to me.

"Yeah well, you never bothered to get into contact with me. So why do you care about me so much now?" I said angrily.

"BECAUSE I STILL LOVE YOU!"

The words were out of Bill's mouth so quickly I barely had time to register what he said.

"You could have written to me! Five years Bill. Five fucking years!"

He ran a ran over his face. "I know I was stupid all right? The truth was that I missed you. I still do because you won't talk to me. I realized my mistake when it was too late. And I was sure you wouldn't want to hear from me."

I felt my heart clench. "I've always wanted you to write to me, to show that you still cared."

He knelt beside the couch. "Fawn, I love you so much and I'm sorry." he took a shaky breath and continued. "I'm sorry I left, and I'm sorry for hurting you. I was dumb and I know that. You can hate me all you want. You can be with Remus Lupin if that makes you happy."

My eyes widened. "Bill I was joking about Remus!"

He looked up, his eyes red. "What?"

I placed my hand on his cheek. "I still love you Bill. I was angry and upset so I said those things about Remus to make you jealous."

Bill smiled. "Well it worked."

I chuckled then groaned in pain. Bill held my hand. "Fawn, can you please forgive me? I get if you don't want to get back toget-"

I cut him off with a kiss. I pulled back smirking when I saw his that his ears had turned red. "Bill, I forgive you, And yes I want to get back together,"

~16~ Confessions

Everyone was super happy when Bill and I announced that we were back together. When everyone went to bed, Bill stayed next to me. My body hurt too much for me to move so I stayed on the couch to sleep. Bill was sitting on the floor, his head resting on my stomach as I played with his long fiery red hair.

Charlie walked into the living room looking nervous.

"What's up Charlie?" I asked.

He sat next to Bill. "I'm planning on proposing to Rue tomorrow."

My eyes widened. "Really?!"

Bill grinned. "That's awesome."

Charlie smiled. "I told everyone and they're really happy. Mum cried when I told her."

"Rue is going to be so happy, I'm sure of it." I said smiling.

The next day, everyone was super excited about Charlie's proposal. Rue was super confused as to why all us girls were super giggly and why the boys kept acting like children whenever Charlie walked into the room. Bill had to help me around the house since my torso still hurt a lot. After dinner, Charlie asked Rue if she wanted to go outside and sit with him for a bit.

When the couple went out, we were all sitting with giddiness. The twins had tried to spy on them through the window until Mrs. Weasley caught them and dragged them back to their seats. After what felt like forever, the backdoor opened and Charlie walked in, looking upset. He stood and looked at us with sadness in his eyes.

"Oh Charlie...." I said, feeling bad for him.

"Rue said..... YES. SHE SAID YES."

Rue barged in grinning and waving her hand, where a new diamond ring was perched on her finger. "HAHA WE GOT YOUUUUU."

Everyone cheered and clapped, hugging and congratulating the new engaged couple. Hermione, Ginny, Mrs. Weasley and I cooed over Rue's ring.

"It's so shiny!" Ginny said.

"I love it," said Hermione.

"Absolutely gorgeous." I gushed.

"So when's the wedding?" asked Harry.

Charlie grinned. "We were thinking sometime next summer."

Rue looked over to me. "Can you be my Maid of Honour?"

I hugged her. "Of course."

At around eleven pm, Mrs. Weasley made Ron, Ginny, Harry, Hermione, Fred and George go to bed. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley went upstairs too after a while.

"Don't stay up too late alright?" Mr. Weasley said before bidding us goodnight.

Now it was just Bill, Charlie, Rue, Percy and I.

"How about I bring some firewhiskey?" Bill suggested.

Everyone agreed and he went to the kitchen, coming back with a bottle and five glasses. Everyone started drinking, although the three boys were the most drunk. Rue and I were pretty sober, but the boys seemed to be so wasted they completely forget we were still with them.

"You know," said Percy, hiccoughing a bit. "I don't know why you left Fawn like that."

"Yea," Charlie drawled. "She was so depressed. Cried for days."

Rue giggled while I sighed. "Alright that's enough drinking for you boys."

But what Bill said next made me freeze.

"I know," Bill said, his words slurring and his eyes droopy. "It was the worst mistake of my life. Fawn doesn't deserve me. I'm not good enough for her. She deserves someone better than me. I suck. I'm a dick. Lucas, Finley and Damon told me that. I was actually planning on asking her to marry me you know."

My jaw dropped and Rue's eyes widened. "Oh my god," she whispered.

Bill, who still didn't notice I was there, continued with his story, all his emotion spilling out. "I regretted what I did, but my dumbass decided to leave her. Lot's of girls tried to hook up with me in Egypt, but I said no."

I smiled at that.

"Were they hot?" Percy asked, trying to stand and tripping and falling back on the couch.

Bill shrugged. "Not as hot as Fawn, I mean.... have you seen that ass?"

Rue snorted and I flushed bright red.

I felt my heart break when Bill started sob quietly. "But that's not why I love Fawn, I love her because....well....she's kind, smart and beautiful. When I see her, my heart swells twice the size. That's why I wanted to marry her. But I got scared, then I got a promotion and didn't know what to do. I still have the ring, it's in my pocket right now."

But at this point of his story, Charlie and Percy had already fallen asleep and were snoring. Rue was looking at me with wide eyes and I stood there staring at Bill.

"You guy's can't tell her though, I'll tell her when I'm ready." he said, hiccupping loudly, before closing his eyes and falling sleep.

Rue managed to wake Charlie up and helped him get upstairs to the room he was sharing with Percy. I quickly fixed Percy so that he was laying properly on the couch, then went to wake Bill up. He woke up and let me take him upstairs. Bill had a room to himself, and so I dragged him there, my torso feeling a bit sore. I led him to his bed and he dropped down.

"Fawn? Is that you?" he asked

I nodded. "Yes, now let me just take off your shoes all right?"

I took them off and pulled the blanket over him.

"Fawn?" he said.

I turned to look at him. "Yes Bill?"

"I love you, so much." he said, closing his eyes.

I smiled. "I love you too Bill."

I kissed his cheek before leaving and closing the door behind me.

~~~~~~~~
Bill, Charlie and Percy woke up with major hangovers from last night, and none of them remembered a single thing that they talked about.

"Were you drunk?" Percy asked me, drinking a potion I made to help with their hangovers.

"No, Rue and I only had like, a few sips." I answered. "Why?"

"What did we talk about?" Charlie asked.

I froze and Rue looked up with her eyes wide.

"You talked about Quidditch!" Rue said

"You talked about the wedding!" I said at the same time.
~~~~~~~~

The boys raised their eyebrows. "Well, which is it?" Bill asked.

"Both," Rue said. I nodded and turned my back on them, hiding my grin.

I couldn't stop thinking about everything Bill had said. Rue told me I should talk to Bill about it, so I decided to ask him straight up.

"Bill can I talk to you for a moment?" I asked.

He stood up and followed me out to the garden, where the twins, Ron, Ginny and Harry were playing Quidditch while Hermione sat reading a book. I lead Bill far away from them.

"So," I said, after we sat down. "Yesterday...."

Bill grimaced. "Oh no, what did we talk about?"

I smiled slyly. "What's in your pocket?"

He raised his eyebrows and felt in his pocket. "I dunno maybe-" his eyes widened and he looked at me. "Why are you asking?" he asked casually.

"Bill, you were so drunk last night you went on a ramble about me."

He flushed. "What did I say?"

I smiled. "Everything you said made me happy,"

His eyes widened. "Wait did I mention about me wanting to, um.....before I left, er....."

"About you wanting to propose?"

He nodded and looked away. I reached over and grabbed his hand, lacing my fingers with his. "I would have said yes."

He looked back at me. "Really?"

I nodded. "Of course, you were, and are still, everything to me."

Bill squeezed my hand. "Would you still say yes?"

I nodded. "Yeah I would,"

I leaned forward and pressed my lips against his. I was disappointed when he pulled away but my heart stopped when he leaned down on one knee and held a ring out.

"Fawn Starling, would you make me the happiest man on earth and marry me?"

~17~ Wedding Announcement

Obviously, I said yes. We decided to not tell anyone anything, so that we could see how long it would take them to notice the ring on my finger.

During lunch, I decided to be the one to serve, making sure that my left hand was as visible as it could be. I was a little upset that no one noticed anything. After dinner, we were all sitting in the living room.

I was sitting on the floor playing wizarding chess with Ron, while Harry sat watching and was yelling instructions at me.

"No Fawn! The pawn the pawn!" he said wildly, waving his arms about.

"Shut up Harry!" I said.

Just as I prodded a chess piece with my left hand, Ron reached over and grabbed it. "What's this ring?"

I grinned cheekily, as he narrowed his eyebrows at me. Harry leaned over to get a closer look.

"Wait, is that.....YOU'RE WEARING AN ENGAGMENT RING?" Harry yelled out.

Everyone looked over.

"What?" Fred said. *"WHAT?"*

Ron's eyes widened. "OH MY GOSH YOU STOLE RUE'S RING!"

"NO YOU IDIOT THIS IS MY OWN RING." I yelled back.

Mrs. Weasley burst into tears. "Oh my goodness, my two eldest sons got engaged only within two days! I love you all so much!"

She pulled Bill, Charlie, Rue and I into a group hug.

"Who said that it was Bill that proposed to Fawn?" Ginny said smirking.

"GINNY!"

"Sorry mum, only joking." Ginny said.

~ ~ ~

When we all went back to Hogwarts, I happily announced my engagement to all the teachers. Everyone was super happy, even Snape congratulated me. Harry was sorted into the Triwizard Tournament even though he was too young, and no one knew who put his name in. Thankfully, he completed all the tasks well. Until the last task when Cedric Diggory was killed by Voldemort, who had returned.

I was pretty shaken up when Harry came back with Cedric's dead body. I had known and taught him ever since he was eleven, and even tutored him because he wasn't very good at History of Magic.

Now, we were at number 12 Grimmauld Place, the summer after the last task. It was Sirius Black's mother home. Dumbledore had told us about a secret society called the Order of the Phoenix, and had asked me, Mr. Weasley, Mrs. Weasley, Bill, Rue, Charlie, Damon, Lucas and Finley to join, along with other wizards and witches I have not met yet.

Charlie and Rue would be staying in Romania, to recruit as many foreign witches and wizards as they could. Bill got a desk job at Gringotts so that he could stay here in England.

Before we could tell Percy however, he came back home from the ministry one day and said he'd been promoted. Long story short, he and his parents had a huge fight and Percy left, saying that if we all were going to be against the Ministry, than he didn't want to be a part of the Weasley family.

When we arrived at Grimmauld Place, Sirius greeted us warmly.

"You all can go put your stuff in the rooms you'll be staying in." he

said happily, as he led us to our rooms.

I was staying in a room with Ginny and Hermione. Bill, Fred and George were sharing one, Ron was having his own until Harry come's so that they can share, and Mr. and Mrs. Weasley had a room to themselves.

As the girls and I were taking our stuff out of our trunks, Sirius knocked and came into the room.

"Hey, Molly told me to come get you for dinner."

We all went downstairs and started helping Mrs. Weasley with setting the table as more people from the Order came.

There were people I didn't know, such as Kingsley Shacklebolt, Dedalus Diggle, Emaline Vance, Elphias Doge, Sturgis Podmore, Mundungus Fletcher, Hestia Jones and Arabella Figg (who happened to be a squib and was Harry's neighbor.) And there were people I knew. Hagrid, Remus Lupin, Minerva McGonagall, Severus Snape, Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody (the real Moody this time) and the familiar face of Nymphadora Tonks.

"We went to school together didn't we?" I said to Tonks as we hugged in greeting.

Tonks nodded. "Yep, I was in the same year as Charlie, Rue and Damon. I was in Hufflepuff though. I work with Damon, Lucas and Finley at the Ministry! We're Aurors together!"

"You're a Metamorphmagus, right?" I asked.

She grinned. "Yea I am,"

And as if to prove a point, she scrunched up her face and changed her blue hair to bubblegum pink.

"Oooh, I love your hair like this!" I gushed.

"Tha-, wait is that an engagement ring?" she said suddenly, pointing to my hand.

I nodded and she grabbed my hand, cooing over the ring. "Who's the lucky man?"

"Bill," I said, motioning to him.

On the other side of the room, Bill was in a deep conversation with Minnie, who looked very stern and was narrowing her eyes at him. Bill looked a bit scared and was nodding his head fervently. Minnie left him to go talk to Mrs. Weasley.

I walked over to Bill and placed a hand on his shoulder. "What were you two talking about?"

Bill looked at me with wide eyes. "She said that if I ever broke your heart again, she'd make sure to turn me into a rat and stuff me into a sewer. Or she's just stick her wand up my arse."

I burst out laughing. "Oh my gosh, I love Minnie,"

When Lucas, Finley and Damon arrived, we all sat down to eat dinner. Everyone was in their own little group, talking about different things. Some were talking about the Order, others were talking about work.

Lucas groaned. "I'm literally exhausted."

I laughed. "What did your mum make you do this time."

He frowned. "She made me clean the kitchen and living room, with no magic."

After dinner, Dumbledore came.

Everyone settled down. He stood at the head of the table and said "Let us began this meeting."

~18~ Order of the Phoenix

Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Fred and George were sent to their rooms, as they were too young to be a part of the meetings.

"And don't bother trying to listen!" Mrs. Weasley said sternly.

Once they left, Dumbledore turned to us. "Now then, I would first like to thank all of you for joining the Order."

He went on into a small speech than started the meeting. He assigned tasks and missions for some people. Mundungus and I were to take turns watching over Harry, without him knowing.
I am a registered Animagus, and can turn myself into a cat, so it would be easy for me to spy on Harry without him seeing me.

During the meeting, Dumbledore told us about the secret weapon. The prophecy. It was what Voldemort was going after, and we had to protect it from him or anyone else getting it. The meeting finished and Dumbledore was about to leave when he turned back to us. "I must ask that you do not repeat a single word of these meetings to anyone else, not even the younger ones."

We all nodded. "Of course Sir."

He was about to leave when he stopped again. "You may tell them about your mission though Fawn, as long as they don't tell Harry."

And with that he left. Everyone left the house except for Lucas, Damon, Finley, Tonks, Sirius and Remus. We all lounged around the living room. It was almost one in the morning so we tried to stay quite. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley went upstairs to bed.

"I didn't know you were an Animagus!" Sirius said, turning towards me.

I shrugged. "It's not something I like to display too often, so that way people don't recognize me."

"Do you have an animal name?" Remus asked.

I shook my head. "No, never thought of it. Why?"

Sirius grinned and nodded towards Remus. "We do. So did James, Harry's dad."

I raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

"Remus here is Moony, James was Prongs and I'm Padfoot."

"Prongs?" I asked.

"He turned himself into a stag."

I nodded. "That's coo-"

Sirius cut me off by saying excitedly "Can I make a name for you?"

I chuckled. "Sure."

"Turn into a cat." he instructed.

I obliged and turned into a black cat. Sirius looked at me and started rambling off names while everyone looked at him with amusement. Finally, his whole face lit up. "Oh I Know! How about 'Noctis Pede'"

I turned back into myself and thought for a moment. "That's actually pretty cute. That's Latin for Night Paw right?"

Remus nodded. "Yeah it is, I actually like that name. Not bad Snuffles."

Sirius groaned. "No! Forget about that nickname please, *I beg you."*

~ ~ ~

The next day, I had to spy on harry. I felt bad, because the poor boy would have no idea. But I knew it was for the best. After eating some breakfast and telling everyone goodbye, I walked out into the fresh summer morning. I turned on my heels and apparated. I apparated a couple blocks away from number Four Private drive, so

that Harry doesn't hear the popping sound of Apparation.

I quickly turned into a black cat and trotted down the road. I found the house pretty quickly, seeing as Harry was laying down underneath the window sill. I wasn't sure why he was there so I crept closer and realized that he was listening to the news that was coming from inside the house.

Harry was much skinnier than last time I've seen him, and even though he was laying down, I could tell that he'd grown taller too. His jet-black hair was as messy as ever, and his glasses were askew, as he laid on his side, his hands pressing against his face. After a while, he sighed and gave up. He started walking down the road and I followed him.

A dog from across the street started barking at me and I ran from it. The barking caught Harry's attention and he turned around to see what going on. He looked at me, where I was standing as far from the dog as I could, and Harry came closer.

"Hello, you're a pretty cat aren't you?" he said, sticking his hand out for me to sniff.

I felt awkward but remembered that he had no idea it was me, so I sniffed his hand and pressed my head against it. He smiled and stroked my fur. I had to admit it felt nice.

He stood up. "Well, I'm off to the park, maybe you could join me." he joked as he started walking off.

I decided that instead of hiding, I'd just follow him. It was obvious he had no friends here, so I thought I'd keep him company. I quickly walked to him and went ahead of him a little so that he could see me.

He looked surprised but grinned. "Ah, so you decided to hangout with me eh?"

My presence seemed to pick up his mood slightly. When we got to the park, he sat on a swing while I sat in front of him, curling up at his feet. Harry seemed to be lost in thought as he sat on the swing,

staring ahead at nothing. I jumped into his lap and settled there. He scratched my head absent mindedly. After a while, he got up and I jumped down from his lap.

I accompanied him home. Before going into his house, he looked at me.

"I think I'll call you Star." he said.

I circled around his legs once then walked down the street. I turned back into myself then apparated back to Grimmuald Place.

The next few weeks flew by pretty quickly. I informed everyone at the last meeting that Harry spent his days listening to the news and walking to the park. Sometimes after watching Harry, Mrs. Figg, who lived close to him, would invite me over for tea. We had meetings every other day.

Fred and George had invented something called Extendable Ears, which they have been using to try and listen in on our meetings. Since Dumbledore always put spells on the door, they couldn't hear anything although that never stopped Mrs. Weasley from yelling at them.

You could also never have quiet time with the twins around. Being seventeen, they were allowed to do magic and Apparate outside of school. They would scare the crap out of everyone by Apparating when we least expect it, or they would bewitch anything and everything with their wands. Once, they accidentally dropped a bowl of pudding on my head. Everyone had different feelings towards the twins actions.

Bill, Sirius and I found it hilarious. Hermione and Mrs. Weasley were very disapproving of their behavior while Mr. Weasley, Ron and Ginny would be somewhat amused but also exasperated at the same time.

One day, Bill and Mr. Weasley were at work and the rest of us were cleaning the house. I noticed that Sirius was not with us so I went to look for him. I found him standing alone in a drawing room.

"Are you alright?" I asked.

He looked up surprised. "Oh yeah, I'm fine,"

I walked into the room and looked around. "Woah is this a family tree?"

He nodded. "Yep,"

"Where are you?" I asked, looking at the family tree, which was painted on the walls and ceiling.

He pointed to a black spot. "Right there, I got blasted off when I ran away. There's my brother Regulus. He was killed by Voldemort."

I scanned the tree. "Oh shit, you're related to Draco Malfoy's mum?"

He nodded. "Yea, Narcissa is Bellatrix and Andromeda's sister." he pointed to the wall. "Andromeda is Tonks' mum, they're all my cousins, I hate them. Except Andromeda, she was always my favorite cousin."

"Why was Andromeda blasted off? And who's that?" I asked, pointing to a fourth one with a black mark, with the name 'unknown' underneath and the dates 'Nov. 1970- Nov. 1970'.

Sirius sighed. "Andromeda married a muggle Ted Tonks and that's a huge disgrace to our family. The unknown one, really sad honestly." he stopped and stared at the wall before continuing.
"After Druella and Cygnus Black had their fourth daughter in 1970, she died. No one knows how. I was really upset about it, and Andromeda came crying to me. They were all depressed. Even Bellatrix, strangely enough."

"Wow," I said. "And her parents didn't name her?"

He shook his head. "She died only a couple days after she was born. I assume that they were all too upset to name her."

Sirius left to go watch over Buckbeak, leaving me to look at the family tree and thinking about this strange family

~ ~ ~

A few days later, we had another meeting. We all sat down and were surprised that Dumbledore had come. He normally doesn't come too often to meetings, but here he was, standing at the end of the table. We started our meeting as usual by telling everyone any news and reports form our missions. After we finished, Dumbledore looked at me.

"Fawn, the reason I cam here today is for you."

Everyone's eyes turned to look at me and I felt slightly scared. "Did I do something wrong Professor?"

He shook his head. "No Fawn, you did nothing wrong."

He stopped for a moment, looking at me.

"I have recently found out, your real family."

I sat straighter. Bill slipped his hand through mine to comfort me.

"And who are they Sir? Are they muggles? Witch and Wizard? One magic and one muggle?" I asked excitedly.

Dumbledore however, was looking grim. "You're a Pureblood."

"What's wrong Professor?"

He sighed. "You are the daughter of Druella and Cygnus Black, which makes you the sister of Bellatrix Lestrange, Narcissa Malfoy, and Andromeda Tonks."

~19~ Fawn Black

We all stared at Dumbledore in shock. I looked over at Sirius.

"Trust me, It's a good thing you never met them." he said grimly.

I let out a shaky laugh. "So, you're telling me that one of my sisters is a crazy, murderous, cold-blooded woman?"

Dumbledore nodded. "I'm sorry, but yes."

Tonks gave me a small smile. "That makes my mum your sister! She's a wonderful woman. I always thought you looked a lot like her."

Everyone was really shocked at this news. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley were looking at me with worried expressions, probably wondering how I'd react. Bill had taken my hand and started running his thumb across my knuckles. Tonks, Sirius, Remus, Lucas, Finley and Damon were looking at me as if they had never seen me before. And everyone else was staring at Dumbledore.

"That makes you my cousin!" said Sirius, his eyes suddenly lighting up.

I chuckled. "Yeah, yeah it does."

"Wait, that means.... you're my aunt?" said Tonks, making a weird face. "But you're only two years older than me, it's weird."

I smiled and looked back at Dumbledore. "So, how did you figure this out?"

He spoke. "I found Druella Black in hiding. Very recently, she died of old age, but I managed to persuade her to speak the truth. She said that after you were born, she and Cygnus realized they didn't want another child. And so they left you on the doorstep of the Starlings, and told your sisters that you died. They went to school with the Starlings. They weren't friends with them, but they knew

where the Starlings lived. The Starlings don't know you're a Black ."

"How did you know it was them though?"

"You look like Andromeda's twin sister." he replied simply.

It was silent for a moment.

"However," he said. "You cannot tell anyone else. With Voldemort back, there is no doubt that he would want you on his side. And I'm sure Bellatrix will try to win you over as well. So you must remain with the name Starling at school and anywhere else."

After the meeting, he and some others left. Minerva placed a comforting hand on my shoulder before leaving. When the younger kids came down, we told them about me being a Black. They were all very surprised but tried not to show it.

As we were eating, I suddenly choked on my butterbeer as I realized something. After Remus cleared my airway with his wand, I gasped out "That means I'm Draco Malfoy's aunt!"

Ron, Fred and George let out groans and cry's of 'OH MY GOD WHY." Ginny and Hermione crinkled their noses and Sirius burst out laughing.

"You just realized that?" he said.

I glared at him. "It's a lot to take in."

Bill kissed my temple and rubbed my back. Sirius glared at us.

"What are you looking at?" I asked.

Sirius pursed his lips. "I don't like what's happening here. You're my cousin and I shall protect you!"

Everyone started giggling and Remus closed his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose.

"Sirius we only found out that you and I are cousins like ten minutes ago!" I said. "And Bill and I have been engaged for a year

now."

Sirius shrugged as Tonks snorted into her drink.

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This is more of a filler chapter XD
~~~~~~~

~20~ Bringing Harry to Grimmauld PLace

A few weeks later, we had an emergency order meeting and Mr. Weasley cam back from work looking frazzled.

"Harry's just been expelled from Hogwarts!"

"Is that what this meeting is for?" asked Lucas.

Mr. Weasley nodded. "Dumbledore is coming soon. He's at the Ministry trying to sort it out"

After a while, Dumbledore finally came. "Thankfully, I have been able to talk the Ministry out of expelling Harry. However, there will be a hearing."

"WHAT?" Sirius and I both exclaimed.

"What did Harry even do?" asked Tonks.

"Dementors attacked him and his cousin, Harry used the Patrounous to protect them."

"That's not fair!" said Bill. "You're allowed to use magic if you're in trouble! Or to protect yourself!"

"What were Dementors doing on a muggle street anyway?" I asked.

Dumbledore sighed. "The Ministry does not believe that there were Dementors. They think it's a lie. And I believe that Voldemort sent them."

We all went silent.

Dumbledore continued. "We will be bringing Harry in a few days. But we must make a plan, in case any Death Eaters try to grab Harry once he leaves the house."

And so we made a plan. Remus, Tonks, Mad-eye, Kingsley, Elphias, Dedalus, Emmaline, Hestia, Sturgis and I would go to Harry's house and come back by broom. Tonks wrote a letter telling the Dursley's that they won an 'All-England Best Kept Suburban lawn Competition' to drive them out of the house long enough for us to take Harry. The day finally arrived and we all apparated to the house. We made sure to hide, and I pointed to the house.

"That's the one." I whispered.

A car pulled out of the driveway and sped off. Tonks and I looked at each other and dissolved into a fit of giggles.

"Shh, be quite you two." said Remus, though he was smiling at us.

Kingsley unlocked the front door with his wand and we walked in. I had never been inside the house before. It was very clean. *Too* clean if you ask me. Tonks knocked over a vase and it fell onto the floor, making a loud crashing noise as it broke.

"Tonks!" I hissed, waving my wand so that the vase fixed itself

"Sorry!" she said.

Moody sighed and waved his wand. We heard a door open upstairs and footsteps coming down. Harry came down, still hidden in the dark.

"Lower your wand boy, before you take someone's eye out." Moody growled.

"Professor Moody?" asked Harry uncertainly.

"I don't know much about 'Professor'," Mad-eye growled. "Never got around to much teaching did I? Get down here, we want to see you properly.

Harry didn't move.

"It's all right Harry. We've come to take you away." said Remus gently.

"P-professor Lupin?" Harry said. "Is that you?"

"Why are we all standing in the dark?" asked Tonks. "Lumos!"

Her wand tip glowed, letting light wash over the hallway, revealing Harry standing a few steps up with his wand clenched in his hand. Some people were craning their necks to get a better look at Harry.

"Ooooh, he looks just like I thought he would!" said Tonks. "Wotcher, Harry!"

"I see what you mean Remus," said Kingsley. "He looks exactly like James.

"Except the eyes," Elphias said. "Lily's eyes."

Mad-Eye stepped forward. "Are you sure it's him Lupin?" he said. "It'd be a nice look-out if we bring back some Death Eater impersonating him. We ought to ask him something only the real Potter would know. Unless anyone brought any Veritaserum?"

"What form does your Patronus take Harry?" asked Remus.

"A stag," Harry replied, looking nervous.

"That's him Mad-Eye." Remus said.

Harry walked down the rest of the staircase then saw me.

"Fawn!" he said, grinning.

"Hey Harry, took you long enough to notice me." I said, bringing him into a hug. When we let go, he put his wand in his back pocket.

"Don't put your wand there boy!" Mad-Eye roared. "What if it ignited? Better Wizards than you have lost their buttocks!"

"Who d'you know that lost a buttock?" asked Tonks curiously.

"Never you mind, you just keep your wand out of your back pocket!" growled Mad-Eye. "Elementary wand-safety, nobody bothers with it anymore." he stumped off to the kitchen. "And I saw

that!" he said, as Tonks rolled her her eyes towards the ceiling.

Remus and Harry shook hands and caught up a bit.

"You're really lucky the Dursley's are out....." Harry mumbled.

"Lucky, ha!" said Tonks. "It was *me* who lured them out of the way. Sent a letter by Muggle post telling them they'd been short-listed for the All-England Best Kept Suburban Lawn Competition. They're heading off to the prize-giving right now..... or they think they are."

I snorted with laughter as Tonks' eyes twinkled.

"We are leaving aren't we?" Harry asked. "Soon?"

"Almost at once," said Remus. "we're just waiting for the all-clear."

"Where are we going?" asked Harry. "The Burrow?"

"Not the Burrow, no, too risky." Remus said, motioning us to the kitchen. "We've set up headquarters somewhere safe."

We walked into the kitchen, where Mad-Eye was sitting at the kitchen table drinking from his flask.

"This is Alastor Moody, Harry," said Remus.

"Yeah I know," Harry said awkwardly.

"And this is Nymphadora-" said Remus.

"*Don't* call me Nymphadora Remus." said Tonks with a shudder. "It's Tonks."

"-Nymphadora Tonks, who prefers to be called by her surname only" Remus finished.

"So would you if your fool of a mother had called you *Nymphadora."* Tonks muttered.

I giggled and she shot me a glare.

"And this is Kingsley Shacklebolt, and that's Elphias Doge. And

that's Dedalus Diggle-"

"We've met before!" Dedalus said, dropping his hat.

Remus finished his introductions. Harry looked extremely awkward as everyone kept staring at him.

"Stop staring," I whispered to Tonks, nudging her side.

"I can't help it *Aunt Fawn*."

"Don't call me Aunt!" I hissed.

Even though I was her aunt, I was only two years older and it felt weird being called aunt by her. And so I told her to not call me aunt but she does it just to annoy me.

"We're just waiting for the signal to tell us it's safe to set off." Remus told Harry. "We've got about fifteen minutes."

"Very clean these muggles aren't they?" said Tonks, looking around in wonder. "My dad's a muggle and he's a downright slob. I suppose it varies just like it does with wizards?"

Harry nodded. "Er, yeah.... what's going on? I haven't heard from anyone, what's Volde-"

He was cut off by us hissing and shushing him while Mad-Eye growled "*Shut it!"*

"What?" said Harry.

"We're not discussing anything here. Too risky." said Mad-Eye, his real eye turning to Harry but his magical eye staying on the ceiling. "*Damn it!* It keeps getting stuck ever since that *scum* wore it!" he said angrily.

He popped the eye out of the socket and it made a gross squelching sound.

"You know that's disgusting right?" said Tonks, though she watched with interest.

Mad-Eye asked Harry for a glass of water, and then put his eye in the glass, shaking it up and down.

"How are we getting to- wherever we're going?" asked Harry.

"Brooms, only way." said Remus. "You're too young to Apparate and they will be watching the Floo network, and we can't set an unauthorized Portkey."

"Remus says you're a good flier." said Kingsley.

"He's excellent," said Remus checking his watch. "You better go get packed Harry, we want to leave as soon as the signal comes."

"I'll come help," I said.

"Me too." said Tonks.

We followed Harry up to his room. Harry's room was really messy, which Tonks and I thought was much better than the rest of the 'too-clean' house. There were books and clothes all over the floor and his bed was messy and unmade. Harry and I picked up books and stuff and put them in his trunk as Tonks looked at her reflection in a mirror.

"I don't think violet is really my hair colour, makes me look a bit peaky, don't you two think?"

"Er," said Harry.

"I like pink better." I said, tossing a book into Harry's trunk.

Tonks scrunched up her nose and turned her hair bubblegum pink.

"How did you do that?" asked Harry wide-eyed.

Tonks smiled and started explaining as I took out my wand and fixed the organization of Harry's trunk. Once we finished packing, Tonks took out her wand and said "Locomoter Tunk!"

Harry's trunk lifted into the air as a went down the stairs, the trunk hovering in front of us. We walked back into the kitchen. Mad-Eye

had put his fake eye back in, Remus was writing a letter, Kingsley and Sturgis were examining a muggle machine and Hestia was laughing at another small thing.

"What's that?" I asked Harry, pointing to where Kingsley and Stugis were standing.

"A microwave." he replied.

"And what does this *microweeve* do?" I asked while peering at the machine.

"It's pronounced *microwave*..... and it heats up food." he said, smiling slightly.

Remus had just finished sealing a letter to the Dursley's.

"Excellent," he said when he saw Harry's trunk. "We've got about a minute I think."

After explaining a couple of things to Harry, Mad-Eye beckoned Harry towards him.

"Come here boy, I need to Disillusion you."

"What?" said Harry nervously.

"Disillusionment charm." he said. "Lupin says you have an Invisibility Cloak but it won't stay one while flying. Here you go-"

He rapped Harry on the head and soon Harry looked just like a chameleon. We stepped out onto the garden and once we saw the signal in the distance, we shot off into the sky. It was a cold night, and I felt the air biting at my face. Harry however, looked lively and was grinning. I could only imagine how he must feel right now, after being locked up with the Dursley's for so long.

We arrived at Grimmuald place and landed.

"Where are we?" asked Harry.

"We'll tell you in a minute," Remus said.

Mad-Eye took out Dumbledore's Out-Puter and the lights went out when he clicked it. "Borrowed it from Dumbledore, don't want any Muggles seeing us."

Mad-Eye took the Disillusionment charm off of harry and Harry became visible again.

When the house came into view, we all went inside. Mrs. Weasley came hurrying forwards and wrapped Harry in a hug. "Harry it's so wonderful to see you. You're looking a bit peaky but you'll have to wait a bit for dinner I'm afraid."

She turned to us. "He's just arrived, the meetings started."

We began walking past Harry and Mrs. Weasley and into the meeting. room.

~21~ Summer's Over

We walked into the dining room and sat down in the remaining seats. Snape was giving a report and pretended that we were not there. When Snape finished, he turned to us.

"How did it go with Potter?" he asked.

"Fine fine, no problems." said Mad-Eye.

"It was really easy. The Dursley's actually believed Tonks' note." I said sniggering.

"Wait till they find out Harry's gone." said Tonks.

I opened my mouth to say something but we suddenly heard shouting from upstairs.

"Should we go-?" asked Bill.

Mrs. Weasley shook her head. "No that's just Harry, I can imagine why he'd be upset."

I nodded. "Let's just continue. Harry needs to vent it'll pass."

Eventually Harry's shouting stopped and we soon finished the meeting.

Mrs. Weasley went to get the children down for dinner. Most people left the house, not staying for dinner. Remus, Mrs. Weasley, Tonks and I were sealing the front door with our wands.

"Oh we're eating in the kitchen," said Mrs. Weasley.

I turned around to see that she was talking to Harry, who had come downstairs.

"Harry, dear, if you'll just tiptoe-" She was cut off by Tonks tripping over the umbrella stand and knocking it over with a crash.

"Tonks!" said Mrs. Weasley.

"I'm sorry!" Tonks wailed as I helped her up.

Suddenly the portrait of Sirius' mother started screaming and yelling

"FILFTH. SCUM." she screamed.

Remus and I ran over and tried to yank the curtains over the painting, but they wouldn't close.

Sirius came running and said "Shut up you horrible hag shut up!"

He yanked the curtain closed and turned to harry.

"Hello Harry, I see you've met my mother."

Tonks, Remus, Mrs. Weasley and I went to the kitchen. Mr. Weasley and Bill had their heads bent together and were speaking quietly. Bill quickly rolled up parchment when he saw Harry walk in.

"Journey all right Harry?' Bill said, trying to gather lots of scrolls. I helped him and took some out of his arms. "Mad-Eye didn't try to make you come via Greenland, then?"

"He tried." said Tonks, coming over to help us but instead, she toppled a candle onto the last piece of parchment.

"Here dear," said Mrs. Weasley, sounding exasperated as she put out the candle.

Harry looked over at the parchment and Mrs. Weasley snatched it up. "That sort of thing ought to be cleared away right at the end of the meeting!" she snapped.

Bill took out his wand and muttered *"Evanesco!"* and the scrolls vanished.

I kissed his cheek. "Be careful, you know how worried your mum gets with the kids are around."

He nodded.

Harry grinned at us. "When are you two getting married? It's been ages!"

I shrugged. "Not sure, with Voldemort back... we just don't think it's a good timing."

He nodded. "Makes sense. What about Charlie and Rue?"

I grinned. "They got married a few weeks ago. It was in Romania and we couldn't go. They kept it small though."

I walked over to help Mrs. Weasley but she shook her head. "No dear you go take a rest. You've been working so hard lately."

"Are you sure?" I asked.

She nodded and I went to sit with Harry, Sirius and Mundungus.

"So Harry, how are things with you and Cho?" I asked casually.

He looked up. "I-, Uh-, What?"

I grinned. "You know, Cho Chang, your crush."

He stared at me. "How did you-?"

While I was in my cat form and keeping Harry company, he had told me all about his crush Cho Chang, not knowing it was me.

I wiggled my eyebrows. "Just think, who have you told?'

He thought for a moment. "Uh only this cat that kept coming arou-."

He stopped. "Wait..... YOU WERE THAT CAT?"

I nodded and laughed. I turned into my cat form and leaped onto Harry's lap. He pushed me off and I turned back to myself.

"Oh my god so now you know everything!" he exclaimed.

I giggled. "Don't worry Potter, I can keep a secret."

Sirius was staring at us and chuckling. "I'm not even going to ask."

Harry groaned. "Yeah please don't."

The summer passed by pretty quickly. Harry was cleared and was now looking forward to go to Hogwarts and Ron and Hermione were made Prefects, which the twins kept bugging Ron about.

September first came and Mrs. Weasley was rushing about. Fred and George bewitched their trunks, sending them down the stairs but accidentally hitting poor Ginny on the head, making her topple down the stairs. Mrs. Weasley started yelling and Mrs. Black's portrait did too.

"COULD HAVE DONE HER A SERIOUS INJURY YOU IDIOTS!"

"FILTH, SCUM BLOOD-TRAITORS. MUDBLOODS!"

Thankfully, Ginny was fine and it was time for us to leave. We were all going in separate groups for safety reasons. Harry was going with Mrs. Weasley and Tonks (who was disguised as an old lady), Ron and Hermione were with Mr. Weasley, and Fred, George and Ginny were with Remus and I while Mad-Eye was taking all the luggage. Bill was at work so he couldn't come. But the night before we stayed up late talking and just cuddling.

We walked to Kings Cross station. Remus and I had to keep Fred and George from walking off too far. At least Ginny was behaving well. She stopped and picked a flower, coming over and putting it behind my ear.

"I can't wait till you're my sister." she said.

"I already am though," I said, linking my arm with hers.

She shook her head. "I know, but I mean my real sister.. when you and Bill get married!"

I chuckled and looked at her fondly as she skipped away to the twins.

"You and Bill should just get married already." said Remus, falling

into step beside me.

I smirked. "You should confess to Tonks already,"

He flushed. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

I wiggled my eyebrows. "Come one Rem, it's *soooo* obvious to any person with at least two brain cells."

He shrugged. "Still don't know what yo-"

I cut him off. "The way you look at her! When you look at her, your face gets all sappy and lovey dovey. It's pretty disgusting."

He rolled his eyes. "You hypocrite! You should see your face whenever you're with Bill."

I grinned. "It's cute when we do it."

Remus said nothing and ignored me when I pressed more about Tonks, so I dropped the topic

~22~ Umbridge

We had a new professor. Dolores Umbridge. She had a pale toad-like face and was a short, squat woman. She worked at the Ministry and when I heard that, I wanted to scream.

Anyway, the first few days of classes were not so bad, but I noticed Draco Malfoy was in a bad mood a lot. Knowing he's my nephew, I had the urge to talk to him, but I couldn't tell him. Not when Dumbledore told me not to. Hagrid was away on a mission for the order, and Umbridge really wanted to find out about it. Even though Minerva, Snape and I knew full well where he was, we lied and said we didn't know.

One day, I was sitting in the staff room with Minnie, Pomona Sprout and Filius Flitwick and we were talking about Umbridge.

"I don't understand..." began Pomona.

"I do," said Minnie briskly. "The Ministry wants to watch over Hogwarts, and Umbridge is... is...."

"A hag." I stated.

"*Fawn!"* said Minnie, shaking her head.

"No, no Fawn's right." said Filius with a chuckle.

The door opened and Umbridge walked in. She smiled sweetly. "Hello,"

"Hello..." we muttered.

"Oh do carry on, don't stop your conversation on my account." she grinned and went to make herself a cup of tea.

"Uh, we were talking about..." began Filius.

"Bill!" said Minnie.

"Oh right, now do tell us, when will you be getting married?" said Pomona.

"Hopefully next summer or the summer after." I said, grateful for Minnie quick thinking.

"Ah, that's too long away." said Minnie.

"You're engaged?" interrupted Umbridge.

I gave her a fake smile. "Yes."

"To whom?" she asked.

"Bill Weasley." I said, smiling to myself.

She raised her eyebrows. "Bill Weasley? Would that make him a relative of Percy Weasley?"

I frowned. "Yes, They're brothers."

She looked at me. "I see, I believe that Percy's family think that You-Know-Who is back?" She laughed.

I narrowed my eyes. "Yes they do, and I think so too."

She pursed her lips and left without saying anything.

I let out a sigh. "I don't know how I'm going to survive this year without punching that old hag in the face."

Minnie nodded. "Me too Fawn, me too."

~ ~ ~

The fact that Harry yelled at Umbridge and called her a liar went around school very fast. I had to admit, I was proud of Harry for standing up for himself, but also thought he was an idiot for doing it to Umbridge.

"You have detention?" I asked him one day after my class.

He nodded glumly. "Everyday for the next week. First one's today."

I sighed. "Well, do look out for yourself."

When I asked Harry what they did in detention, he just said lines. I felt like he was lying but I couldn't get anything out of him.

One day, Draco had failed to submit his homework to me for the fourth day in a row and I had enough.

"This is the fourth day Mr. Malfoy!" I said, when I called him into my office.

"I have other homework too Professor Starling!" he said.

I narrowed my eyes. "I know perfectly well you're not doing any other homework too."

He looked up. "How do you-?"

"You realize us professors talk right? We always talk about our best and worst students. We also talk about those who *don't submit their homework on time."*

He sighed "All right, all right, I'll do it!"

I placed a hand on his shoulder. "Look Malfoy, if there's something going on in your life that's holding you back or distracting you from your studies, you can talk to me ok?"

His eyes clouded. "Well....."

I sat down in front of him and waited.

"My dad, he um...."

I held up a hand. "Does this have to do with him being a Death Eater?"

He looked up. "Potter told you didn't he."

I nodded. "He did, I won't tell anyone, just so you know."

"You won't?"

I shook my head. "I won't, now what seems to be the problem?"

He sighed. "I'm pretty sure my parents want me to be a Death eater when I'm old enough, and I don't want to. I'm not evil. I've been brought up on certain things but.... it's just too much."

I nodded. "What about you bullying the other students?"

He looked away. "I only do that so the other Slytherin's don't think I'm a fraud or something. Don't tell anyone this either please."

I smiled. "How about I tell you a secret."

He raised an eyebrow. "Ok, what is it?"

I leaned against my desk. "How many sisters does you mother have?"

He looked confused. "Two."

"Anyone else?"

He thought for a moment. "Oh, there is another sister, but she died a couple days after she was born."

I looked at him. "She didn't die... that sister is me."

He looked shocked. "What? Does my mum know?"

I shook my head. "No and she can't, I'll keep your secret if you keep mine."

He nodded. "Course I will..... wait you're my aunt?"

I smiled. "Yes, I am."

"How come we can't tell anyone that you're a Black? Or are you a Weasley now?"

I chuckled. "No Bill and I aren't married yet. And we can't tell anyone because if Voldemort hears about me, he might try to get me onto his side. Professor Dumbledore says I'll be safer if I keep going as Fawn Starling."

Draco shuddered at Voldemort's name. "Makes sense. We can't even tell my mum?"

I shook my head. "Nope, what if your dad finds out? He's a Death Eater."

He looked away. "Oh right yeah."

He looked back at me. "Does my Aunt Andromeda know?"

I nodded. "Yes, she does. Never met her yet though."

"You look a lot like her."

I smiled. "I know, her daughter, your cousin, said so too."

His eyes widened. "Wait, when you get married to that Bob Weasley-"

"Bill," I corrected.

"Right Bill, that means I'll be related to the Weasleys?"

I smiled. "Yup."

He grimaced. "So I'll be related to Ron Weasley."

I grinned. "Yup."

He sighed. "I guess I can live with that as long as you stay the way you are."

I raised an eyebrow. "Meaning?"

He shrugged. "Caring. You seem to care about me more than my own mother."

I had no idea how to reply to that, so I just hugged him tightly. "You're my nephew, I'll make sure you're safe and well."

"Thanks Aunt Fawn."

~23~ Inspections and St. Mungos

Umbridge was going to be inspecting the classes at Hogwarts, which I was not excited about.
On the day of my inspection, I was teaching the fifth year class when Umbridge walked in. I gave her a quick nod and continued with my class. "Now can anyone tell m-?"

"Hem hem,"

I sighed. "Yes Professor Umbridge?"

She smiled sweetly. "I was wondering if you have gotten my notice on me inspecting your class today?"

I raised an eyebrow. "Did I question why you're here?"

"No."

"Then of course I saw it."

She flushed. "Yes of course, do go on."

I continued with the class. It went pretty well. Umbridge just sat in her corner and wrote notes, her beady eyes sweeping across the room. At one point, she walked around and went to Draco. "Mr. Malfoy, I was wondering.... how do you like Professor Starling as a teacher?"

"She's wonderful, can't imagine anyone else teaching this class other than her." he said.

I smiled to myself. After class when everyone was leaving, Umbridge came to me.

"How many years have you been teaching for?"

"Five years." I started pulling out my notes for my sixth year class.

"And how old are you now?"

"twenty-four."

"What did you do before teaching at Hogwarts?"

I placed my book into my bag. "I was a Healer for a year."

She nodded. "Thank you, you will be getting you're results in ten days time."

"Great thanks." I said coolly. Luckily, I passed the inspection, which Bill was thrilled about.

"I miss you Fawn." he said.

His head was in my fireplace and I was sitting on the ground in front of him. We talked for a while before there was a knock at the door.

"Come in!"

The door opened and Draco walked in.

"Hi Aunt Fawn.. oh I can come back later if you're busy." he said when he saw Bill's head in the fireplace.

"No, it's fine. Come meet Bill."

Draco sat in front of the fireplace next to me and I introduced them to each other.

Draco turned to me. "Bill's cool, I'd like him as an uncle as soon as possible please."

Bill and I burst out laughing.

"Don't worry, it'll be soon." I said, as I patted Draco's shoulder.

I had told Bill that Draco knew and that he promised not to tell anyone. After a while, Bill had to go to work.

"I'll talk to you later. Nice meeting you Draco, love you Fawn." and with a pop, his head disappeared.

"So," I said turning to Draco. "Why did you say all that crap about Harry's mum and Mr. and Mrs. Weasley?"

In the last Quidditch match, when the Gryffindor team won, Draco and insulted Harry's mum and Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, causing Harry and George to fight Draco and now they, along with Fred, were banned from playing Quidditch.

Draco looked away. "I don't know, I was angry."

I crossed my arms. "So? How would you feel if someone else got angry and insulted your parents?"

He glared at me then sighed. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have insulted your Parents-in-law,"

"You should say sorry to Harry and the Weasley's, not me."

He nodded. "Ok I will."

~ ~ ~

The rest of the term passed pretty quickly, until a few days before winter break, when Mr. Weasley was attacked by a snake and was sent to St. Mungo's. Harry and the Weasley's went to Grimmuald place already but Hermione and I had to wait until the term ended officially. When we finally left, I grabbed Hermione's hand and we Apparated. Walking into Grimmuald place, Hermione rushed up to Harry while I went to Mrs. Weasley and hugged her.

"I'm so glad he'll be ok." I said.

"I am too dear."

After talking to Ron, Ginny, Fred and George, I looked around for Bill. "Where's-?

"At work, he'll be coming soon." said Sirius, popping his head into the living room.

Apparently, Harry kept himself shut up in his room. He had seen a vision of Mr. Weasley being attacked and thought that he was the one who went there to attack. Dumbledore said that Harry just saw it through the eyes of the snake, but Dumbledore wouldn't tell us much. When Bill came back, I ran to him and hugged him.

He wrapped his arms around me. "I've missed you." he choked out.

We walked upstairs to an empty room and sat down.

Bill took a deep shaky breath. "I was at St. Mungo's with mum, when dad went. It was so scary, I thought he was gone."

I felt tears spring into my eyes and I kissed him. "It's alright, he'll be alright."

On Christmas, we went to St. Mungo's to visit Mr. Weasley. We went with Mad-Eye, Remus, Lucas, Finley, and Damon along with Harry, Hermione and the Weasley's.

When Mr. Weasley saw us, he beamed. He looked well, and was sitting propped up in his bed.

"Everything all right Arthur?" Mrs. Weasley asked, after we all handed Mr. Weasley our presents.

"Fine, fine," he said, a bit too heartily. "You-er-haven't seen Healer Smethyck have you?"

"No," Mrs. Weasley said suspiciously. "Why?"

"Nothing, nothing," he said airily. He then started looking at our gifts and saying things like "Oh how *wonderful!* Thank you!"

Mrs. Weasley was not satisfied with his answer. When Mr. Weasley leaned over to shake Harry's hand, she peered at the bandages under his nightshirt.

"Arthur," she snapped. "Why have you had your bandages changed a day early? They told me you wouldn't need doing that until tomorrow."

"Well, don't get upset Molly, but Augustus Pye had an idea. He's the Trainee Healer, you know, lovely young chap. And he's very interested in....um..... old muggle remedies. Well, they're called *stitches* Molly and they work very well, on um.... muggle wounds."

Mrs. Weasley let out a noise between a shriek and a snarl. Remus strolled over to the bed where a werewolf, who had no visitors, was sitting alone. Bill stood up, muttering something about getting tea. Fred, George, Lucas, Finley, Damon and I jumped up and followed Bill, leaving Mrs. Weasley to rage.

"*Stiches*, mental I tell you," said Fred.

"I heard they do work well," I replied. Back when I was a Healer, I was also interested in Muggle remedies.

Bill grimaced. "How about no."

We walked into the small sitting room for visitors. I didn't want tea, I had only come to get out of the room. We sat and talked for a while when I heard someone say "Fawn?"

I turned around and grinned. "Joseph!" I said, going over to hug him.

Joseph Kirk (Healer Kirk) had worked with me when I was a Healer here, and he was also the one to Heal me when I was here at fourteen, after my adoptive dad beat me up.

"It's been forever!" he said, then his eyes trailed to my finger. "Married?!" he yelped.

I laughed. "Engaged."

He warmly greeted Bill, Fred and George. They had all met him when I was injured.

"Wow, how you all have grown, and you boys." he said to the twins. "How old are you now?"

"We're sixteen, turning seventeen on April 1st." said George.

Joseph's eyes twinkled. "April fools day? Who would have thought. I remember when you boys would run through these halls while everyone was visiting Fawn. Drove everyone crazy, but not me."

The twins laughed and Bill and I smiled at the memory. I quickly introduced Joseph to Lucas, Finley and Damon. When they greeted each other, Joseph checked his watch. "I better get goin, lot's of presents to give out. Nice seeing you all!" he gave me a quick hug and fist bumped the boys, then walked out of the room.

"Nice lad," said Bill. "He was always my favorite here."

~ ~ ~

A few days later, Mr. Weasley was able to leave St. Mungo's. And so Bill and I went together to bring him back to Grimmuald place. Luckily, Mr. Weasley was healthy enough to Apparate so getting back to headquarters was easy. When we walked in, the rest of the Weasley's, plus Hermione greeted us warmly and hugged Mr. Weasley.

"Harry and Sirius are the the kitchen, they're meeting with Severus." said Mrs. Weasley.

I looked up. "Severus?"

She nodded. "Not sure why, maybe they'll tell us after."

We walked into the kitchen with happy expressions.

"Cured!" said Mr. Weasley walking through the kitchen door. "Completely cured!"

We all froze staring at what was happening in front of us.

Sirius and Snape were staring at us with both of their wands pointed at each other, and Harry was standing between them with his arms stretched out towards them.

"Merlin's beard." said Mr. Weasley. "What's going on here?"

Sirius and Snape dropped their wands and Snape left, ignoring us.

"Six o'clock, Monday evening Potter." Snape said, and with that, he left.

"What's been going on?" asked Mr. Weasley again.

"Nothing Arthur," said Sirius. "So... you're cured? Great news, really great."

"Yes isn't it," said Mrs. Weasley, leading Mr. Weasley to a chair. "And Arthurs learned his lesson on dabbling with muggle remedies, *haven't you dear?"* she added, menacingly.

"Yes, Molly dear." said Mr. Weasley meekly.

~24~ Dumbledore's Army

Soon it was time to go back to Hogwarts. We went on the Knight Bus, which I've always hated. I was glad when we got off the bus. We bade Remus, Tonks and Bill goodbye and went up to the castle.

Term was stressful with the O.W.L's and N.E.W.T.'s coming up, but it was boring otherwise. Well, Umbridge sacked Trelawney and humiliated her in front of the whole school. Minnie and I comforted Trelawney while Dumbledore confronted Umbridge and showed her the new Divination teacher, a centaur named Firenze, who was banished from the Forbidden Forest.

After that was a bit calmer, until one day, as I was marking some homework, Minerva barged into my office.

"Minnie what's-?"

"The Minister is here Fawn!"

I stood up. "What? Why?"

"I'm not entirely sure, but something about a secret meeting."

We rushed up to Dumbledore's office. When we reached the gargoyle, I said "Fizzing Whizzbee" and the gargoyle sprang aside. We ran up the stairs and and hurried through the door. I saw Dumbledore sitting behind his desk. The minister, Cornelius Fudge, was standing against the wall looking pleased. I saw another man with short wiry hair that I recognized as John Dawlish, an Auror. Kingsley was also there, but we ignored each other even though we had become close friends. We knew that it would look highly suspicious to Fudge. Percy was also there looking excited while holding a large roll of parchment and a quill.

"Hello Minister," I greeted.

"Starling," he said, nodding slightly.

"Hi Percy," I said.

Looking up, Percy frowned. "Oh, hi." he said before looking back down.

I felt my heart clench, not daring to believe that Percy, who I was once able to call a younger brother, would ignore me so. But I was shaken out of my thoughts when the door opened and Umbridge walked in, gripping Harry tightly.

Fudge smirked. "Well, well, well..."

"He was heading back to Gryffindor tower," Umbridge said. "The Malfoy boy cornered him."

No, not Draco. I thought

"Did he?" said Fudge. "I must remember to tell Lucius. Well Potter, I expect you know why you're here?"

"Ye-no." Harry said.

"I beg your pardon?" said Fudge.

"No," said Harry, firmly this time.

"You *don't* know why you're here?"

"No, I don't." said Harry.

Fudge looked from Harry to Umbridge. I noticed Dumbledore giving Harry a slight nod and a wink.

"So you have no idea," said Fudge sarcastically. "Why Professor Umbridge has brought you here? You are not aware that you have broken any school rules?"

"School rules?" asked Harry. "No,"

"Or Ministry Decrees?' Fudge said angrily.

"Not that I'm aware of." said Harry.

"So it's news to you that an illegal student organization as been found within this school?"

"Yes it is," said Harry, his face innocent.

"I think Minister," said Umbridge. "we might make better progress if I fetch our informant."

Fudge nodded. "Yes, yes please do."

Umbridge left, and after a few minutes of painful silence, Umbridge returned with a Ravenclaw student Marietta Edgecombe, who was hiding her face with her hands.

"Don't be scared dear, you've done the right thing." said Umbridge softly. She turned to Fudge. "Marietta's mother is Madam Edgecombe from the Department of Magical Transportation, Floo Network office, she's been helping us police the fires."

"Jolly good," said Fudge happily. "Like mother like daughter eh? Well come on dear now look up. Let's hear what you've got to-
galloping gargoyles!"

Marietta had lifted her head. I gasped and Fudge stepped back into the fireplace, cursing as he stomped the fire away from his robes. Marietta gave a wail and covered her face again, but we had already seen the large purple spots that spelt the words 'SNEAK' over her cheeks and nose.

"Never mind that dear just tell the Minister what you've got to say!" said Umbridge, looking irritated.

Marietta shook her head.

"Oh then I'll tell him you silly girl." Umbridge snapped. "Miss Edgecombe came to my office after dinner and told me that if I go to a secret room on the seventh floor, sometimes known as the Room of Requirement, I would find a meeting being held there. But then this hex started working on her face and when she saw her face in my mirror, then she became too distressed to tell me more."

"Well now dear, you did the right thing it was very brave of you,"

said Fudge. "Now tell me about the meeting. What is the purpose? Who was there?"

Marietta shook her head again, her eyes wide.

"Is there a counter-jinx for this so she can talk freely?" asked Fudge impatiently.

"I haven't found on yet," muttered Umbridge.

I glanced sideways at Minnie and she glanced back at me. I knew then and there that we both guessed it was Hermione who did this jinx.

"You will remember," said Umbridge. "That I sent you a report that Potter had met a number of students in the Hog's Head in Hogsmeade back in October-"

"And what's you evidence for that?" cut in Minnie.

"I have testimony with Willy Widdershins, Minerva, who happened to be at the bar at the time. He heard every word Potter had to say and hastened straight away to tell me-"

"Oh, so *that's* why he wasn't prosecuted for setting up all those regurgitating toilets!" I cut in, raising my eyebrows. "What an interesting insight into our justice system!"

"Blatant corruption!" roared the portrait of Fortescue that was on the wall behind Dumbledore's desk. "Exactly what Fawn said, how *interesting!* The Ministry did not cut deals with criminals back in my day, no sir, they did not!"

"Yes, thank you Fortescue that will do," said Dumbledore.

"The purpose of Potter's meeting with these students," said Umbridge, "was to persuade them them to join an illegal society, whose aim was to learn spells and curses that the Ministry has decided are inappropriate for school-age-"

"I think you will find you are wrong there, Dolores," said Dumbledore quietly.

"Oho!" said Fudge, "Yes, let's hear the latest cock-and-bull story designed to pull Potter out of this one! Go on Dumbledore, Willy Widdershins was lying then was he? Or was it Potter's twin in Hogsmeade? Or this time the usual simple explanation involving a reversal of time, a dead man coming back to life and a couple of invisible Dementors?"

Percy laughed heartedly. "Oh very good Minister very good!"

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, preventing myself from kicking Percy or doing something that would get me in trouble.

"Cornelius, I do not deny that Harry was in the Hog's Head that day recruiting students to a Defence Against the Dark Arts group. I am merely pointing out that that Dolores is quite wrong to suggest that such a group was, at the time, illegal. If you remember, the Ministry Decree banning all student societies was not put into effect until two days after Harry's Hogsmeade meeting. So he was not breaking any rules at all in the Hog's Head."

Percy looked stunned and Fudge was shocked. I smiled to myself.

Umbridge spoke up. "That's all very fine Headmaster, but we are now nearly six months on from the introduction of Educational Decree Number 24. If the first meeting wasn't illegal, all the ones that have happened since most certainly are."

Dumbledore smiled. "They certainly would be, if they had continued. Do you have any evidence that any such meetings continued?"

As Dumbledore was talking, I noticed Kingsley whisper something, and I felt something cool swish past me. Kingsley looked at me and gave a small wink.

"Evidence?" said Umbridge, smiling. "Have you not been listening Dumbledore? Why do you think Miss. Edgecombe is here?"

"Oh, can she tell us about six months worth of meeting?" asked Dumbledore, raising his eyebrows. I was under the impression that she was merely reporting a meeting tonight."

"Miss. Edgecombe." said Umbridge. "Tell us how long these meetings have been going on for dear. You can simply nod or shake your head, I'm sure that won't make the spots worse. Have they been happening regularly over the past six months?"

I felt my heart hammer in my chest as we waited for Marietta to answer Umbridge.

"Just nod or shake your head dear," said Umbridge kindly. "Come on, now, that won't activate the jinx further."

Everyone was staring at Marietta's eyes, which was the only thing visible between her pulled up robes and her curly fringe. Marietta's eyes looked oddly blank, and she shook her head.

Umbridge looked between Marietta and Fudge. "I don't think you understood my question dear, I'm asking if you you've been going to these meetings for the past six months. You have, haven't you?"

Marietta shook her head again, and I understood that Kingsley must have modified Marietta's memory.

"What do you mean by shaking your head dear?" asked Umbridge testily.

"I would have thought that her meaning was quite clear," said Minnie harshly. "There have been no secrete meetings for the past six months, is that correct Miss Edgecombe?"

Marietta nodded.

"But there was a meeting tonight!" said Umbridge angrily. "There was a meeting Miss Edgecombe, you told me about it, in the Room of Requirement! And Potter was the leader, was he not, Potter organized it, Potter- *why are you shaking your head girl?"*

"Well, usually when a person shakes their head," I said coldly, "they mean 'no.' So unless Miss Edgecombe is using a form of sign language as yet unknown to humans..."

Professor Umbridge seized Marietta, pulled her around to face her, and began shaking her very hard. A split second later Dumbledore

was on his feet, his wand raised. Kingsley started forward and Umbridge leapt back from Marietta, waving her hands in the air as though they had been burned.

"I cannot allow you to manhandle my students, Dolores," said Dumbledore, and for the first time, he looked angry.

"You want to calm yourself, Madam Umbridge," said Kingsley in his deep, slow voice. "You don't want to get yourself into trouble now."

"No," said Umbridge breathlessly, glancing up at the towering figure of Kingsley. "I mean, yes — you're right, Shacklebolt — I — I forgot myself."

I glared at Umbridge, Minnie placed her hand on my shoulder to stop me from going over and punching Umbridge.

"Dolores," said Fudge, with the air of trying to settle something once and for all, "the meeting tonight — the one we know definitely happened."

"Yes," said Umbridge, pulling herself together, "yes . . . well, Miss Edgecombe tipped me off and I proceeded at once to the seventh floor, accompanied by certain trustworthy students, so as to catch those in the meeting red-handed. It appears that they were forewarned of my arrival, however, because when we reached the seventh floor they were running in every direction. It does not matter, however. I have all their names here, Miss Parkinson ran into the Room of Requirement for me to see if they had left anything behind. . . . We needed evidence and the room provided . . ."

She withdrew from her pocket a list of names and handed it to Fudge.

"The moment I saw Potter's name on the list, I knew what we were dealing with," she said softly.

"Excellent," said Fudge, a smile spreading across his face. "Excellent, Dolores. And . . . by thunder . . ."

He looked up at Dumbledore, who was still standing beside

Marietta, his wand held loosely in his hand.

"See what they've named themselves?" said Fudge quietly. *"Dumbledore's Army."*

Dumbledore reached out and took the piece of parchment from Fudge. He gazed at the heading scribbled on the parchment and for a moment seemed unable to speak. Then he looked up, smiling.

"Well, the game is up," he said simply. "Would you like a written confession from me, Cornelius — or will a statement before these witnesses suffice?"

Kingsley, Minnie and I looked at each other with fearful faces. *What was Dumbledore doing?*

"Statement?" said Fudge slowly. "What — I don't — ?"

"Dumbledore's Army, Cornelius," said Dumbledore, still smiling as he waved the list of names before Fudge's face. "Not Potter's Army. *Dumbledore's Army."*

Understanding blazed suddenly in Fudge's face. He took a horrified step backward, yelped, and jumped out of the fire again.

"You?" he whispered, stamping again on his smoldering cloak.

"That's right," said Dumbledore pleasantly.

"You organized this?"

"I did," said Dumbledore.

"You recruited these students for — for your army?"

"Tonight was supposed to be the first meeting," said Dumbledore, nodding. "Merely to see whether they would be interested in joining me. I see now that it was a mistake to invite Miss Edgecombe, of course."

Marietta nodded. Fudge looked from her to Dumbledore, his chest swelling.

"Then you have been plotting against me!" he yelled.

"That's right," said Dumbledore cheerfully.

"NO!" shouted Harry.

Kingsley flashed a look of warning at him, Minnie widened her eyes threateningly and I shook my head at Harry.

Harry ignored our warning looks.

"No — Professor Dumbledore!" he said.

"Be quiet, Harry, or I am afraid you will have to leave my office," said Dumbledore calmly.

"Yes, shut up, Potter!" barked Fudge, who was still ogling Dumbledore with a kind of horrified delight. "Well, well, well — I came here tonight expecting to expel Potter and instead —"

"Instead you get to arrest me," said Dumbledore, smiling. "It's like losing a Knut and finding a Galleon, isn't it?"

"Weasley!" cried Fudge, now positively quivering with delight, "Weasley, have you written it all down, everything he's said, his confession, have you got it?"

"Yes, sir, I think so, sir!" said Percy eagerly, whose nose was splattered with ink from the speed of his note-taking.

"The bit about how he's been trying to build up an army against the Ministry, how he's been working to destabilize me?"

"Yes, sir, I've got it, yes!" said Percy, scanning his notes joyfully.

"Very well, then," said Fudge, now radiant with glee. "Duplicate your notes, Weasley, and send a copy to the Daily Prophet at once. If we send a fast owl we should make the morning edition!" Percy dashed from the room, slamming the door behind him, and Fudge turned back to Dumbledore. "You will now be escorted back to the Ministry, where you will be formally charged and then sent to Azkaban to await trial!"

"Ah," said Dumbledore gently, "yes. Yes, I thought we might hit that little snag."

"Snag?" said Fudge, his voice still vibrating with joy. "I see no snag, Dumbledore!"

"Well," said Dumbledore apologetically, "I'm afraid I do."

"Oh really?"

"Well — it's just that you seem to be laboring under the delusion that I am going to — what is the phrase? 'Come quietly' I am afraid I am not going to come quietly at all, Cornelius. I have absolutely no intention of being sent to Azkaban. I could break out, of course —but what a waste of time, and frankly, I can think of a whole host of things I would rather be doing."

Fudge stared at Dumbledore, then looked at Kingsley and Dawlish. Dawlish gave Fudge a reassuring nod and moved forward a little, away from the wall, his hand drifting, almost casually, toward his pocket.

"Don't be silly, Dawlish," said Dumbledore kindly. "I'm sure you are an excellent Auror, I seem to remember that you achieved 'Outstanding' in all your N.E.W.T.s, but if you attempt to — er — 'bring me in' by force, I will have to hurt you."

"So," sneered Fudge, recovering himself, "you intend to take on Dawlish, Shacklebolt, Dolores, and myself single-handed, do you, Dumbledore?"

"Merlin's beard, no," said Dumbledore, smiling. "Not unless you are foolish enough to force me to."

"He will not be single-handed!" said Minnie loudly, plunging her hand inside her robes and I stepped forward, drawing my wand.

"Oh yes he will, Minerva and Fawn!" said Dumbledore sharply. "Hogwarts needs you!"

"Enough of this rubbish!" said Fudge, pulling out his own wand. "Dawlish! Shacklebolt! Take him!"

A streak of silver light flashed around the room. There was a bang like a gunshot, and the floor trembled. Minnie grabbed the scruff of Harry's neck and I grabbed Marietta, and we forced them down on the floor as a second silver flash went off — several of the portraits yelled, Fawkes screeched, and a cloud of dust filled the air. I saw a dark figure fall to the ground with a crash in front of him. There was a shriek and a thud and somebody cried, "No!" Then the sound of breaking glass, frantically scuffling footsteps, a groan — and silence.

Through the dust, I saw Dumbledore walk to us.

"Are you all right?" said Dumbledore.

"Yes!" said Minnie as we got up, dragging Harry and Marietta with us.

The dust was clearing. The wreckage of the office loomed into view: Dumbledore's desk had been overturned, all of the spindly tables had been knocked to the floor, their silver instruments in pieces. Fudge, Umbridge, Kingsley, and Dawlish lay motionless on the floor. Fawkes the phoenix soared in wide circles above them, singing softly.

"Unfortunately, I had to hex Kingsley too, or it would have looked very suspicious," said Dumbledore in a low voice. "He was remarkably quick on the uptake, modifying Miss Edgecombe's memory like that while everyone was looking the other way — thank him for me, won't you, Minerva and Fawn? Now, they will all awake very soon and it will be best if they do not know that we had time to communicate — you must act as though no time has passed, as though they were merely knocked to the ground, they will not remember

"Where will you go, Dumbledore?" whispered Minnie. "Grimmauld Place?"

"Oh no," said Dumbledore with a grim smile. "I am not leaving to go into hiding. Fudge will soon wish he'd never dislodged me from Hogwarts, I promise you. . . ."

"Professor Dumbledore . . ." Harry began.

Dumbledore cut Harry off before he could say another word.

"Listen to me, Harry," he said urgently, "you must study Occlumency as hard as you can, do you understand me? Do everything Professor Snape tells you and practice it particularly every night before sleeping so that you can close your mind to bad dreams — you will understand why soon enough, but you must promise me..."

Dawlish was stirring. Dumbledore seized Harry's wrist.

"Remember — close your mind, you will understand," whispered Dumbledore.

Fawkes circled the office and swooped low over him. Dumbledore released Harry, raised his hand, and grasped the phoenix's long golden tail. There was a flash of fire and the pair of them had gone.

"Where is he?" yelled Fudge, pushing himself up from the ground. "Where is he?"

"I don't know!" shouted Kingsley, also leaping to his feet.

"Well, he can't have Disapparated!" cried Umbridge. "You can't inside this school!"

"The stairs!" cried Dawlish, and he flung himself upon the door, wrenched it open, and disappeared, followed closely by Kingsley and Umbridge.

"Well, Minerva and Fawn," said Fudge nastily, straightening his torn shirtsleeve, "I'm afraid this is the end of your friend Dumbledore."

"You think so, do you?" said Minnie scornfully as I placed my hand on Harry's shaking shoulder.

Fudge seemed not to hear her. He was looking around at the wrecked office. A few of the portraits hissed at him; one or two even made rude hand gestures.

"You'd better get those two off to bed," said Fudge, looking back at

Minnie and I with a dismissive nod toward Harry and Marietta.

We said nothing, but marched Harry and Marietta to the door. As it swung closed behind them, I heard Phineas Nigellus's voice.

"You know, Minister, I disagree with Dumbledore on many counts. . . . but you cannot deny he's got style. . . ."

~25~ Umbridge As Headmistress

Dolores Jane Umbridge (High Inquisitor) has replaced Albus Dumbledore as Head of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The above is in accordance with Educational Decree Number Twenty-eight.

Signed:
Cornelius Oswald Fudge
Minister of Magic

These notices were up all over the school by the next day, and everyone seemed to know more or less what had happened in Dumbledore's office, including the fact that Minnie and I were there, which meant hundreds of students asking me questions, but I'd always reply with a curt "This is a professor business, now get to class!"

During lunch time, as I was sitting in the Great Hall eating, there was a loud **BOOM!**

Minnie, Filius, Pomona and I looked at each other. We rushed past the students into the hallway and saw Dragons comprised entirely of green-and-gold sparks, soaring around the halls.

"What on earth-?" said Filius.

"Who did this?" asked Minnie, looking happy.

"I can guess who." I said laughing as my mind sprang to Fred and George.

Fireworks were exploding everywhere. Filch and Umbridge were standing, transfixed, staring at the fireworks.

"Hurry, Filch, hurry!" shrieked Umbridge. "They'll be all over the

school unless we do something — Stupefy!"

A jet of red light shot out of the end of her wand and hit one of the rockets. Instead of freezing in midair, it exploded with such force that it blasted a hole in a painting of a soppy-looking witch in the middle of a meadow . She ran for it just in time, reappearing seconds later squashed into the painting next door, where a couple of wizards playing cards stood up hastily to make room for her.

"Don't Stun them, Filch!" shouted Umbridge angrily.

"Right you are, Headmistress!" wheezed Filch, who was a Squib and could no more have Stunned the fireworks than swallowed them.

I was laughing when I saw Harry, also laughing, going through a door. I followed Harry and went in to see Harry, Fred, and George hiding there.

"Amazing fireworks boys." I said, grinning to Fred and George.

"Impressive," Harry said quietly, grinning. "Very impressive.... You'll put Dr. Filibuster out of business, no problem..."

I chuckled.

"Cheers," whispered George, wiping tears of laughter from his face. "Oh, I hope she tries Vanishing them next.....They multiply by ten every time you try."

The fireworks were going out throughout the entire day. As I was teaching the fifth year history of magic, a large, sparkly purple dragon shot through a window, sending shards of glass everywhere as the dragon started flying above the students.

I waved my wand to repair the window and turned to Neville.

"Mr. Longbottom could you please go fetch Professor Umbridge and tell her we have a firework here and I need her to get rid of it for me."

Neville left and I was happy to see Draco trying not to laugh, though his friends looked bored and annoyed.

When Umbridge came and managed to put the fireworks away, I smiled at her.

"Thank you Professor! You know, I know how to get rid of them, but I didn't know if I'd be sacked for doing it without your permission." I said happily.

Umbridge looked mad when I shut the door and all the students laughed and cheered.

The fireworks went of into the night, and I slept happily, listening to the loud bangs going off outside.

~ ~ ~

A couple of weeks later, I was walking through the halls when I heard loud noises coming from the entrance hall. *What one earth?* When I reached the entrance hall, I saw a crowd of students and teachers in a circle, watching.

"What's going on?" I asked Filius, as I stood next to him. My eyes widened at the scene in front of me.

Fred and George were standing in front of Umbridge, who was looking at the twins angrily. Peeves was bobbing overhead watching the twins and the Inquisitorial Squad were looking very pleased... except for Draco. He had a forced smile on his face. He caught my eye and gave me a sad smile.

"Filch!" Umbridge said. "Go fetch the approval for whipping form. *Now!"*

Filch grinned. "Yes Headmistress."

He shuffled off and my heart clenched. *Whipping?* The evil *hag!*

Filius must have felt me shaking from anger because he grabbed my arm. "Don't."

"I have to do something Filius!" I hissed. "They're my soon to be brothers!"

He shook his head firmly.

"So!" said Umbridge triumphantly. "So . . . you think it's amusing to turn a school corridor into a swamp, do you?"

Fred looked calm. "Pretty amusing, yeah."

Filch came shuffling back, waving the form eagerly. "I've got the form and I've got the whips waiting. . . . Oh, let me do it now. . . ."

"Very good, Argus," said Umbridge said. "You two," she went on, gazing down at Fred and George, "are about to learn what happens to wrongdoers in my school."

"You know what?" said Fred. "I don't think we are."

He turned to his twin.

"George," said Fred, "I think we've outgrown full-time education."

"Yeah, I've been feeling that way myself," said George lightly

"Time to test our talents in the real world, d'you reckon?" asked Fred.

"Definitely," said George

And before Umbridge could say a word, they raised their wands and said together, "Accio Brooms!"

I heard a loud crash somewhere in the distance. I ducked as Fred and George's broomsticks, one still trailing the heavy chain and iron peg with which Umbridge had fastened them to the wall, were hurtling along the corridor toward their owners. They turned left, streaked down the stairs, and stopped sharply in front of the twins, the chain clattering loudly on the flagged stone floor.

"We won't be seeing you," Fred told Professor Umbridge, swinging his leg over his broomstick.

"Yeah, don't bother to keep in touch," said George, mounting his own.

Fred looked around at the assembled students, and at the silent,

watchful crowd.

"If anyone fancies buying a Portable Swamp, as demonstrated upstairs, come to number ninety-three, Diagon Alley — Weasleys' Wizarding Wheezes," he said in a loud voice. "Our new premises!"

"Special discounts to Hogwarts students who swear they're going to use our products to get rid of this old bat," added George, pointing at Professor Umbridge.

"STOP THEM!" shrieked Umbridge, but it was too late. As the Inquisitorial Squad closed in, Fred and George kicked off from the floor, shooting fifteen feet into the air, the iron peg swinging dangerously below. Fred looked across the hall at the poltergeist bobbing on his level above the crowd.

"Give her hell from us, Peeves."

Peeved swept his hat from his head and gave a salute to the twins.

George looked at me. "Hey Fawn! Do your best to annoy Umbridge won't you? You're really good at doing that."

I burst out laughing and gave him a thumbs up.

Fred and George wheeled about and shot out of the great doors, as we all clapped and cheered.

~ ~ ~

The twins departure was the most exciting thing to happen at Hogwarts.

With the O.W.L.'s and N.E.W.T.'s coming up, history classes were starting to be stressful. Luckily, I knew that *most* of my students would do fine. And so the exams came and everyone seemed to be doing just as I had thought.

One night, I knew the fifth years were doing their practical Astronomy exam. As I was in my office marking some homework, I heard a loud BANG from outside.

I nearly toppled off my chair. "Merlin's Balls!"

I looked out of my window and saw about six figures in front of Hagrid's hut. Jets of red light were shooting at him.

"Why the hell are they trying to stun Hagrid!" I said angrily to myself.

I burst out of my office and ran out into the grounds, drawing out my wand. I saw that Minnie had reached Hagrid before me.

"How dare you!" shouted Minnie as she ran. "How *dare* you!"

"Leave him alone! *Alone,* I say!" said Minnie voice through the darkness. "On what grounds are you attacking him? He has done nothing, nothing to warrant such —"

Four of the figures shot Stunning spells at her, knocking her back and she fell on her back and moved no more.

I yelled out with anger and pumped my legs faster. "HOW DARE YOU STUN HER YOU SON OF A-"

Someone tried to stun me but I deflected it quickly.

"COWARDS!" bellowed Hagrid "RUDDY COWARDS! HAVE SOME O' THAT — AN' THAT —"

Hagrid took two huge swipes at the figures and knocked them out. He bent down and picked Fang up and ran off.

"Run fast Hagrid!" I yelled.

Umbridge sent one last Stunning Spell after him but it missed, and Hagrid, running full-pelt toward the distant gates, disappeared into the darkness.

Umbridge turned to me, looking angry. "Go back inside Professor Starling."

I stalked towards her. "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!" I raised my wand.

She held up a hand. "If you attack me, you could get sent to

Azkaban."

I growled and took a deep breath. I wanted nothing more than to punch Umbridge in the face, but I knew if I got into trouble, I wouldn't be able to stay and watch over Harry and the others. I turned around sharply and went over to Minnie.

I looked up to see Madam Poppy Pomfrey running towards me. "I saw... from my window." she said, panting.

Together we heaved Minnie up and carried her to the Hospital Wing.

"Will she be alright?" I asked Poppy.

She nodded. "Should be fine, might have to send her to St. Mungos."

I sighed and left the Hospital Wing. I saw Harry, Ron and Hermione walking up ahead with the other fifth year Gryffindor's.

"Hey guys!" I said.

They turned around and ran to me.

"Fawn are you ok?" asked Hermione.

"We saw what happened." said Harry.

Ron hugged me.

I nodded and wrapped my arms around Ron. "I'm fine"

They invited me to the Gryffindor tower and I followed them. No one questioned why I was there, they all seemed happy to see that I was well.

"But why sack Hagrid now?" asked Angelina Johnson, shaking her head. "It's not like Trelawney, he's been teaching much better than usual this year!"

"Umbridge hates part-humans." I said bitterly.

"She was always going to try and get Hagrid out." said Hermione.

"And she thought Hagrid was putting nifflers in her office." piped up Katie Bell.

"Oh blimey," said Lee Jordan, covering his mouth. "It's me who's been putting the nifflers in her office, Fred and George left me a couple, I've been levitating them in through her window. . . ."

"Lee!" I said.

"She'd have sacked him anyway," said Dean. "He was too close to Dumbledore."

"That's true," said Harry, sinking into an armchair beside Hermione's

"I just hope Professor McGonagall's all right," said Lavender tearfully, looking at me.

"She'll be fine." I said, smiling at her.

"They carried her back up to the castle, we watched through the dormitory window," said Colin Creevey "She didn't look very well. . . ."

I shook my head. "She'll be fine." I repeated.

"Madam Pomfrey will sort her out," said Alicia Spinnet firmly. "She's never failed yet."

Sure enough, Minnie was moved to St. Mungo's the following morning. The day was gloomy and depressing for me, even though it was a fairly nice day out.

Later that afternoon, Severus Snape burst into my office.

"Harry Potter's gone to the Ministry!"

~26~ Battle at the Ministry

The Ministry? Could that boy never catch a break?

"What? Why?!" I asked.

"Potter thinks that he saw Sirius being tortured at the Ministry by Voldemort. I don't know if it's true but I know that he's gone to the Ministry, and the two Weasley's, Granger, Longbottom and Lovegood have gone with him." he said as we ran thorough the castle.

I swore under my breath. "What should we do?"

"I called up other Order members. You should go to the Ministry to make sure they're ok, I'll go check and see if Black is at home."

He rushed off and I continued running out of the castle. I ignored all the students who were yelling greetings at me. I sprinted all the way to Hogsmeade and apparated to the Ministry. Drawing my wand out, I stepped into the empty Ministry.

Quickly rushing through the halls, I made my way to the Department of Mysteries. I heard yells and rushed in, going through different rooms, and I found myself staring at Harry, Neville and many death eaters. Bellatrix Lestrange was pointing her wand at Neville.

"CRUCCIO!" she yelled gleefully.

Neville screamed out in agony and I raised my wand. With a loud bang, Neville dropped to the floor and Bellatrix was sent flying backwards, skidding on the floor.

"LEAVE THEM ALONE!" I yelled out angrily.

Bellatrix looked up and her face paled.

"Andromeda?" she asked weakly, but she focused on my face and

stood up slowly. "You're not Andromeda, you look a lot like her...."

"Andromeda is my sister." I said.

Her eyes widened. "But-you-I."

"I am Fawn Black and I am not dead."

She gaped at me. "You're my dead sister? I-, how?"

"Druella and Cygnus lied." I said simply.

Bellatrix walked to me slowly and I stepped back. But she did something I never expected. She hugged me.

"Oh Fawn, I can't believe it." she said, wrapping her arms around my neck and pulling me in close. I didn't move a muscle. She pulled back and studied my face, touching my cheek with her cold fingers. "You've grown up to be so beautiful."

I didn't move and I didn't say a word. I was fully aware of everyone standing still and watching. Harry, who already knew, was looking angry and scared, with his eyes on Bellatrix. Neville looked frightened and confused. The Death Eaters eyes were glued to Bellatrix, with their wands raised, waiting for her instructions.

"Get away from me." I whispered.

Her face hardened then softened again. "I can't be mad at you. You were raised wrongly! Come with me, and I'll teach you the right ways. Come join our Lord, Fawn."

I laughed. "I was raised wrongly? You are sick. Sick and twisted that's all you are."

Bellatrix's smiled faded. "I'll give you one more chance dear sister....."

I smiled. "You are no sister of mine."

She growled. "Blood or not, I'll kill you if you do not join us!"

"I'd like to see you try!" I retorted.

Everyone was watching us with fearful expressions.

"Well then, I'll have some fun first before I kill you. CRUCCIO!" she screamed, pointing her wand at me.

I felt a sudden agonizing pain. I dropped to my knees, yelling out. Dying would have been better than this. The pain was unbearable. The pain suddenly stopped and I kneeled at the ground, sobbing.

"STOP IT!" cried Harry.

"That was just a taster." said Bellatrix. *"Cruccio!"*

The pain returned and I screamed out. I wanted it to end, just end. I couldn't take it. *Just kill me* I thought to myself.

The pain stopped again.

"Now Potter," said Bellatrix. "either give us the prophecy, or watch your little friend die the hard way!"

I saw Harry hold the Prophecy out, and I wanted to tell him to stop. Just as Lucius Malfoy strode forward to Harry, the two doors burst open and Bill, Sirius, Remus, Lucas, Finley, Damon, Tonks, Mad-eye and Kingsley sprinted into the room.

"NOT MY FIANCE YOU BITCH!" yelled Bill, and he shot a curse at Bellatrix.

Everyone else got into the fight and started firing jinxes at the Death Eaters. I felt someone grab me by the scruff of the neck and drag me away from the commotion.

"Fawn are you alright?" Harry asked, letting go of me.

I managed to nod. "Never been better."

Looking up, I saw Bill battling Bellatrix. Bill looked angry. I got up and joined the fight. I fired a jinx at Lucius Malfoy.

As we all fought, Bellatrix managed to knock Bill to the floor and was now battling Sirius.

"HARRY TAKE THE PROPHECY, GRAB NEVILLE AND RUN!" Sirius yelled.

I shot jinx after jinx at Malfoy, when I heard someone yell "Dumbledore!"

Everyone looked up, and sure enough, Dumbledore was sweeping into the room, knocking down Death Eaters with ease.

Only two people were still battling. Sirius and Bellatrix.

"Come on, you can do better than that!" Sirius yelled, his voice echoing around the cavernous room.

I saw the anger in Bellatrix's eyes and I knew she was ready to kill. So I did the only thing I could think of.

"Hey Bellatrix!" I yelled. "You're a wuss!"

Bellatrix and Sirius turned to look at me. Bellatrix looked furious and Sirius looked like he was about to laugh.

Bellatrix raised her wand at me. "How dare you!" she screamed and shot a curse at me.

I managed to deflect it. We kept firing curse after curse.

"AVADA KEDAVRA!" she yelled.

"STUPEFY!" yelled out Harry at the same time.

Bellatrix's curse hit me in the chest.

The last thing I saw was her triumphant face and I heard everyone yelling out before the darkness surrounded me.

~27~ Gone

Third Persons POV:

"AVADA KEDAVRA!" Bellatrix yelled out.

"STUPEFY!" yelled out Harry at the same time.

The green jet of Bellatrix's curse hit Fawn straight in the chest. Everyone watched with horror as Fawn fell backwards and moved no more.

"FAWN!" screamed Bill as he ran forwards to Fawn's still body.

Mad-Eye Moody had crawled across the room to where Tonks lay and was attempting to revive her. Kingsley ran forward to continue fighting Bellatrix. Bellatrix hit Kingsley with a spell and he fell, yelling out in pain. Bellatrix Lestrange turned tail and ran as Dumbledore whipped around. He aimed a spell at her but she deflected it.

Harry felt the anger boiling in him and he pulled away from Neville, scrambling up the stone benches. People were shouting behind him but he did not care. The hem of Bellatrix's robes whipped out of sight ahead and they were back in the room where the brains were swimming.

Dumbledore followed Harry and everyone else went to Fawn and Bill.

Bill was clutching Fawn's limp body, crying out. "No Fawn, don't go please." he wailed.

Sirius knelt down beside Bill. "This is all my fault." he said his voice cracking as he looked at his cousin.

"It's not your fault." said Remus, clutching Sirius' shoulder, trying to keep himself from crying, for the sake of Bill and Sirius.

Lucas, Finley and Damon pushed through the crowd of people.

"Fawn?" said Lucas.

"No." whispered Finley.

"NO!" cried Damon.

"She's gone. AND IT'S ALL MY FAULT!" Bill screamed. He stroked Fawn's hair as his tears fell on her peaceful looking face. "I wasted all those years not talking to her, for nothing, and now.... she's gone."

Neville had come forward and took Fawn's wrist in his hand. "Bill!"

Bill ignored Neville and continued crying.

"Bill!" said Neville louder.

"Shut up!" said Bill.

"BILL SHE'S NOT DEAD!"

Bill looked up. "What?"

Neville held out Fawn's wrist. "She still has a bulse." he said thickly, through his broken nose.

Bill took Fawn's wrist and gasped when he felt the weak thumping of Fawn's pulse. "But how?"

"Harry's stunning spell must have hit Fawn first!" said Damon suddenly, his cheeks stained with tears. "She's stunned, not dead."

Dumbledore swept into the room, along with many Ministry members. Dumbledore walked straight to where Bill was holding Fawn, looking grim. "Is she-"

"Fawn's not dead." said Sirius.

Dumbledore smiled slightly. "Harry will be thrilled to hear that. He's quite distressed at the moment. I've sent him back to Hogwarts. I sent the other students there as well. Bill if you could be so kind to

take Fawn to the Hospital Wing at Hogwarts-"

"THAT'S SIRIUS BLACK!" Fudge yelled.

"He is innocent Cornelius." said Dumbledore.

Fudge's face turned red and he sputtered.

"All will be explained once I send Fawn to Hogwarts." said Dumbledore.

He took a watch out of his pocket and tapped it with his wand. "Portus." he said.

Bill, still holding Fawn, grabbed the watch and they transported to Hogwarts, straight in the Hospital Wing.

Ginny, Neville, Hermione, Ron and Luna were in beds, getting mended by Pomfrey. Bill laid Fawn down on a bed and waited.

~28~ Ministry Fight Is over

Fawn POV:
I woke up with a groan and was attacked by Bill who smashed his lips on mine. I wrapped my arms around his neck but we were suddenly wrenched apart.

"Don't attack her with your mouth please Mr. Weasley." said Poppy irritably. "She needs to *rest!"*

Bill looked sheepish. "Sorry."

I smiled at Bill and held his hand.

Harry hugged me. "I'm so glad you're ok."

I pulled him back. "What happened to me?"

Harry tucked his hands in his pocket and explained everything that happened to me.

I felt my heart clench. "You went after her?"

He nodded and I felt tears spring into my eyes. The fact that Harry was angry enough to kill Bellatrix after he thought she killed me really meant a lot to me. "Thank you Harry, but stop going headfirst into trouble please."

He chuckled. "Trouble always finds me."

I looked around the room and saw Ron and Hermione in two other beds. Luna and Neville were standing next to Harry.

Just as everyone finished hugging me, the doors burst open and Draco ran into the room. He threw himself on top of me. "Aunt Fawn! I can't believe it! I'm so sorry I can't believe your own sister would try to kill you!" he sobbed.

I rubbed his back. "Oh Draco I'm fine, just calm yourself."

I noticed everyone staring at Draco with shock and I knew what they were thinking. Draco never showed any emotions or any traces that he cared about anyone or anything.

He got up and I wiped his tears. "It's fine."

He sniffed. "My mum wants to meet you." he said.

I raised an eyebrow. "You told her?"

He shook his head. "No. You didn't read the Daily Prophet?"

"No."

Luna stepped forwards and handed me the Daily Prophet. "Here you go Professor Starling. Or should I call you Professor Black now? Everyone knows already."

I opened up the Daily Prophet and began to read aloud.

"Bellatrix Lestrange has still not been found after her departure with He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. It is said that Fawn Black (who had always gone by Fawn Starling), the History of Magic Professor at Hogwarts, is Lestrange's believed to be dead sister. Lestrange had attempted to murder Black but the Boy Who Lived deflected the curse and saved Black. Parents are now worried about Black being a Professor at Hogwarts...."

I stopped reading with a sigh. "Well, it was bound to get out soon I suppose." I noticed a figure wearing all pink in the bed across from me. "Is that Umbridge?"

Hermione snorted and told me about how she and Harry lured her into the forest centaurs took her away, then Dumbledore went in and came back with her, though no one knew what happened since Dumbledore won't say, and apparently Umbridge hasn't said a single word since coming back.

I started laughing and my side started to hurt. "No way! *Ow."*

Bill squeezed my hand. "Careful."

I took a closer look at Umbridge. Her usually neat mousy hair was

very untidy and there were bits of twig and leaf in it, but otherwise she seemed to be quite unscathed.

"Madam Pomfrey says she's just in shock," whispered Hermione.

"Sulking, more like." said Ginny.

"Yeah, she shows signs of life if you do this," said Ron, and with his tongue he made soft clip-clopping noises. Umbridge sat bolt upright, looking wildly around.

"Anything wrong, Professor?" called Poppy, poking her head around her office door.

"No.....no....." said Umbridge, sinking back into her pillows, "no, I must have been dreaming..."

Hermione, Ginny and I muffled our laughter in the bedclothes.

The day before the end of term, I was out of of the Hospital Wing and back to full health. During dinner, Umbridge had tried to sneak out of Hogwarts but Peeves found her and started whacking her alternately with a walking stick and a sock full of chalk. Peeves had borrowed Minnie's walking stick and so Minnie was loudly expressing how upset she was that she couldn't go after Umbridge herself. I, however, ran with Peeves and started yelling at Umbridge. The students laughed and cheered as we watched Umbridge run off.

The next day, we were going back to Kings Cross. When we arrived at the station and went though the barrier where a large group of people were standing there and waiting for us. There was Mad-Eye Moody, looking quite as sinister with his bowler hat pulled low over his magical eye as he would have done without it, his gnarled hands clutching a long staff, his body wrapped in a voluminous traveling cloak. Tonks stood just behind him, her bright bubble-gum-pink hair gleaming in the sunlight filtering through the dirty glass station ceiling, wearing heavily patched jeans and a bright purple T-shirt bearing the legend the weird sisters. Next to Tonks was Remus, his face pale, his hair graying, a long and threadbare overcoat covering a shabby jumper and trousers. At the front of the group stood Bill,

Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, dressed in their Muggle best, and Fred and George, who were both wearing brand-new jackets in some lurid green, scaly material.

"Ron, Ginny, Fawn!" called Mrs. Weasley, hurrying forward and hugging us tightly. "Oh, and Harry dear — how are you?"

"How's Sirius?" I asked after kissing Bill.

"He's well, he's staying with us at the Burrow while Dumbledore is getting everything sorted out." he replied.

"Hello, Harry," said Remus, as Mrs. Weasley let go of Harry and turned to greet Hermione.

"Hi," said Harry. "I didn't expect . . . what are you all doing here?"

"Well," said Remus with a slight smile, "we thought we might have a little chat with your aunt and uncle before letting them take you home."

"I dunno if that's a good idea," said Harry at once.

"Oh, I think it is," growled Mad-eye, who had limped a little closer. "That'll be them, will it, Potter?"

He pointed with his thumb over his shoulder; his magical eye was evidently peering through the back of his head and his bowler hat. I looked over to see where Mad-Eye was pointing and saw the three Dursley's.

"Ah, Harry!" said Mr. Weasley, turning from Hermione's parents, whom he had been greeting enthusiastically, and who were taking it in turns to hug Hermione. "Well — shall we do it, then?"

"Yeah, I reckon so, Arthur," said Mad-Eye.

He and Mr. Weasley took the lead across the station toward the place where the Dursleys stood, apparently rooted to the floor. Hermione disengaged herself gently from her mother to join the group.

"Good afternoon," said Mr. Weasley pleasantly to Vernon, coming to a halt right in front of him. "You might remember me, my name's Arthur Weasley."

Vernon turned a deeper shade of puce and glared at Mr. Weasley, but chose not to say anything, partly, perhaps, because the Dursleys were outnumbered two to one. Aunt Petunia looked both frightened and embarrassed. She kept glancing around, as though terrified somebody she knew would see her in such company. Dudley, meanwhile, seemed to be trying to look small and insignificant, a feat at which he was failing extravagantly.

"We thought we'd just have a few words with you about Harry," said Mr. Weasley, still smiling

"Yeah," growled Mad-Eye. "About how he's treated when he's at your place."

"I am not aware that it is any of your business what goes on in my house..." began Vernon.

"I expect what you're not aware of would fill several books, Dursley," growled Mad-Eye.

"Anyway, that's not the point," interjected Tonks, whose pink hair seemed to offend Petunia more than all the rest put together, for she closed her eyes rather than look at her. "The point is, if we find out you've been horrible to Harry..."

"And make no mistake, we'll hear about it," added Remus pleasantly.

"Yes," said Mr. Weasley, "even if you won't let Harry use the fellytone.."

"Telephone," whispered Hermione.

"Yeah, if we get any hint that Harry's been mistreated in any way, you'll have us to answer to," I said happily.

"And it won't be nice." said Mad-Eye.

"Are you threatening me, sir?" Vernon said, so loudly that passersby actually turned to stare.

"Yes, I am," said Mad-Eye, who seemed rather pleased that Vernon had grasped this fact so quickly.

"And do I look like the kind of man who can be intimidated?" barked Vernon.

"Well . . ." said Moody, pushing back his bowler hat to reveal his sinisterly revolving magical eye. Uncle Vernon leapt backward in horror and collided painfully with a luggage trolley. "Yes, I'd have to say you do, Dursley."

He turned from Vernon to Harry. "So, Potter . . . give us a shout if you need us. If we don't hear from you for three days in a row, we'll send someone along."

Petunia whimpered piteously. It could not have been plainer that she was thinking of what the neighbors would say if they caught sight of these people marching up the garden path.

'Bye, then, Potter," said Moody, grasping Harry's shoulder for a moment with a gnarled hand.

"Take care, Harry," said Remus quietly. "Keep in touch."

"Harry, we'll have you away from there as soon as we can," Mrs. Weasley whispered, hugging him again.

I hugged Harry. "Can't wait to get you away from these dunderheads."

Harry laughed and hugged me tight.

"We'll see you soon, mate," said Ron anxiously, shaking Harry's hand.

"Really soon, Harry," said Hermione earnestly. "We promise."

He smiled at all of us and walked away with the three Dursleys hurrying behind him.

I took Bill's hand and Mrs. Weasley turned to us. "How about we go home now, I think we could all use some dinner!"

~29~ Back at the Burrow

Me and the Weasley's went to the Burrow. Hermione, Tonks, Remus and Mad-Eye said they'd join us another time. When we went in I saw Sirius sitting on a sofa and reading a book.

"SNUFFLES!" I yelled.

He looked up and grinned. "Fawn!"

We hugged each other tightly. He stepped back to take a good look at me. "Glad to see you're alright. I wanted to come visit you but Dumbledore said that I shouldn't go out until news about my innocence goes in the Daily Prophet."

"It should come out tomorrow." said Bill happily.

And sure enough, the next day Ron came running into the kitchen, waving that days Daily Prophet news.

"It just arrived! Look!"

He threw the article on the table and we all jumped up and crowded around. We each read it silently and Sirius was looking very happy.

"I can't believe it. I can finally be free. Out. I can.... do the things I've been wanting to do forever!"

I hugged him. "Oh I'm so happy for you."

"I should find my own place now I think," he said.

And with that, we strode out the door and shut it behind him.

Later that night, I was in the kitchen sitting at the table reading a letter that Draco had sent me earlier that day. I had already read it about ten times, but I felt sadder each time I read it.

Dear Aunt Fawn,
I hope you're doing well. I really miss you. Mum won't stop raving about you. She says she really wants to meet you, but not when you're with the Weasley's. She looked like she was about to have a heart attack when I told her you're engaged to a Weasley. Anyway, with You-Know-Who back, I fear I won't be able to send as many letters. If you don't hear from me, don't worry. It probably has something to do with that.

Love,
Draco.

I wiped a tear off my cheek. It hurt, to know this poor boy has to be a part of Voldemort's circle. I was so into reading, I hadn't realized someone had come into the kitchen until I felt someone lean against my back and wrap their arms around me.

"Are you alright?" Bill whispered.

I couldn't bring myself to answer so I held the letter out. Bill read it and handed it back to me. "You need to sleep darling,"

I shook my head. "No."

He ignored my comment and carried me bridal style to his room.

"But your mum." I said.

"We've been engaged for nearly three years, I think one night should be fine." he said slyly.

He laid me down on his bed and crawled in next to me. I burrowed my face into the crook of his neck and breathed in his sweet smell as he wrapped his arms around me. "Tell me everything." he whispered.

I sighed. "I'm just so worried... about everyone. And Harry and Draco. Draco doesn't want to be like his parents. But he has to. And Harry, he's so young. He doesn't deserve this. And Percy isn't talking to any of us. And Charlie and Rue are in Romania. We haven't seen them in a year. What if something happens to them. Or you. Or me.. and...and..."

He kissed me. "Shhh Fawn. It's alright. I know you're scared. I'm scared too. We're all scared. You're so strong and brave. And such a fighter. I know it. I've seen it."

"I'm not a fighter, or brave or strong. " I mumbled.

"Are you serious? You're scary when you're angry." he chuckled and I had to laugh a little too.

"I love you lots Bill."

"I love you too Fawn."

The next morning, the door opened and we heard. "Hey Bill have you seen Faw- OH MY GOD FAWN! BILL! MUM'S GOING TO KILL YOU!"

Bill and I jumped up to see Ron and Ginny. Ginny was grinning at us while Ron looked disgusted.

"Piss off Ron." said Bill bitterly.

I rolled out of bed and quickly went to the room I shared with Ginny, getting dressed and brushing my teeth. I suddenly heard shouting and went downstairs to the kitchen to see Mrs. Weasley raging at Bill.

Fred, George, Remus, Sirius and Tonks were there as well. The twins, Tonks and Remus had smirks on their faces while Sirius looked angrily at Bill.

"SLEEPING IN THE SAME BED? WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?"

"Mum just...."

"DON'T YOU MUM ME WILLIAM WHAT IF YOU GOT HER PREGNANT."

At that everyone had many different reactions.

Remus choked on his coffee. Sirius stood up looking like he was about to punch someone. Tonks, Ginny and the twins burst out

laughing. Ron looked even more disgusted. Mr. Weasley looked at a loss for words. Bill was staring at his mother in shock and amusement and I just stood there with my eyes wide.

"Mrs. Weasley we've never.... done it." I said quietly.

"I- what?"

"Mum, we're both, you know....."

Her eyes narrowed. "Yes well that could change anytime now could it?"

"Molly," said Mr. Weasley. "They've been engaged for three years. Maybe leave them alone a bit. they're smart, they won't do anything drastic. Especially in troubled times like these."

Mrs. Weasley sighed. "I'm sorry you two. I'm just so worried. And if... well.... if a baby came along, it's not a very good time for something like that."

I hugged Mrs. Weasley. "Don't you worry Mrs. Weasley, we're careful."

Mrs. Weasley smiled. "I'm being silly, why don't you all sit down for breakfast."

We all sat down and began to eat.

"When's Hermione coming?" asked Ron casually. A bit too casually.

"You just saw her yesterday Ron." said Ginny, raising her eyebrow.

Ron just shrugged, but his ears had turned a bright red.

"Well, you'll need to send a letter won't you?" said Mrs. Weasley, completely oblivious so Ron's awkwardness.

A couple of weeks later, Hermione arrived one early morning.

I hugged her tightly. "Hi Hermione, How're you?"

"I'm fine thank you Fawn. Where's Ron?"

"He's in his room I think he's still slee-"

Before I even finished my sentence, Hermione was already bounding up the steps. I smiled to myself. With Bill being at work, I felt slightly bored. Mrs. Weasley insisted I didn't clean up around the house and I normally woke up with the house being clean already.

~30~ Mollywobbles

One night, it was around one in the morning and I was in the kitchen with Mrs. Weasley and Tonks.

"I just don't know what else to do." said Tonks sadly. "He loves me, he told me so. But with him being a werewolf....."

I sighed. "Remus is just being stupid. Maybe just give him some time?"

Mrs. Weasley nodded. "Remus is being a bit much dear, Fawn and I can talk to him."

Tonks smiled just as someone knocked on the door three times. Mrs. Weasley jumped and hurried to the door.

"Who's there?" she said nervously. "Declare yourself!"

"It is I, Dumbledore, bringing Harry." said the voice.

Mrs. Weasley opened the door at once. "Harry, dear! Gracious, Albus, you gave me a fright, you said not to expect you before morning!"

"We were lucky," said Dumbledore. I could see ushering Harry over the threshold. "Slughorn proved much more persuadable than I had expected. Harry's doing, of course. Ah, hello, Fawn! Nymphadora!"

I waved. "Hi Professor. Hi Harry."

"Hi Fawn," said Harry

"Hello, Professor," Tonks said. "Wotcher, Harry."

"Hi Tonks."

"I'd better be off," Tonks said quickly, standing up and pulling her cloak around her shoulders. "Thanks for the tea and sympathy,

Molly and Fawn."

"Please don't leave on my account," said Dumbledore courteously, "I cannot stay, I have urgent matters to discuss with Rufus Scrimgeour."

"No, no, I need to get going," said Tonks, not meeting Dumbledore's eyes. "'Night..."

"Dear, why not come to dinner at the weekend, Remus, Sirius and Mad-Eye are coming...?"

"No, really, Molly...thanks anyway...Good night, everyone."

Tonks hurried past Dumbledore and Harry into the yard; a few paces beyond the doorstep, she turned on the spot and vanished into thin air. Mrs. Weasley looked troubled, and I felt upset for Tonks too.

"Well, I shall see you at Hogwarts, Harry," said Dumbledore. "Take care of yourself. Molly, Fawn, your servant."

He made Mrs. Weasley a bow and followed Tonks, vanishing at precisely the same spot. Mrs. Weasley closed the door on the empty yard and then steered Harry by the shoulders into the full glow of the lantern on the table to examine his appearance.

"You're like Ron," she sighed, looking him up and down. "Both of you look as though you've had Stretching jinxes put on you. I swear Ron's grown four inches since I last bought him school robes. Are you hungry, Harry?"

"Yeah, I am," said Harry.

"Sit down, dear, I'll knock something up."

Harry sat down next to me and Crookshanks jumped onto his knees.

"So Hermione's here?" he asked happily as he tickled Crookshanks behind the ears.

"Oh yes, she arrived the day before yesterday," I said.

Mrs. Weasley rapped a large iron pot with her wand. It bounced onto the stove with a loud clang and began to bubble at once. "Everyone's in bed, of course, we didn't expect you for hours. Here you are..."

She tapped the pot again; it rose into the air, flew toward Harry, and tipped over; Mrs. Weasley slid a bowl nearly beneath it just in lime to catch the stream of thick, steaming onion soup

"Bread, dear?"

"Thanks, Mrs. Weasley."

She waved her wand over her shoulder; a loaf of bread and a knife soared gracefully onto the table; as the loaf sliced itself and the soup pot dropped back onto the stove, Mrs. Weasley sat down opposite him.

"So you persuaded Horace Slughorn to take the job?"

Harry nodded.

"He taught Arthur and me," said Mrs. Weasley. "He was at Hogwarts for ages, started around the same time as Dumbledore, I think. Did you like him?"

His mouth now full of bread, Harry shrugged and gave a noncommittal jerk of the head.

"I know what you mean," said Mrs. Weasley, nodding wisely. "Of course he can be charming when he wants to be, but Arthur's never liked him much. The Ministry's littered with Slughorn's old favorites, he was always good at giving leg ups, but he never had much time for Arthur...didn't seem to think he was enough of a highflier. Well, that just shows you, even Slughorn makes mistakes. I don't know whether Ron's told you in any of his letters...it's only just happened...but Arthur's been promoted!"

I smiled. When Mr. Weasley came home a few nights ago saying he was promoted, we were all thrilled.

Harry swallowed a large amount of very hot soup. "That's great!" he

gasped.

"You are sweet," beamed Mrs. Weasley.

Harry's eyes were watering and Mrs. Weasley must have thought it was emotion for the news. I assumed it was because the soup was so hot.

"Yes, Rufus Scrimgeour has set up several new offices in response to the present situation, and Arthur's heading the Office for the Detection and Confiscation of Counterfeit Defensive Spells and Protective Objects. It's a big job, he's got ten people reporting to him now!" Mrs. Weasley said happily.

"What exactly?"

"Well, you see, in all the panic about You-Know-Who, odd things have been cropping up for sale everywhere, things that are supposed to guard against You-Know-Who and the Death Eaters. You can imagine the kind of thing...so-called protective potions that are really gravy with a bit of bubotuber pus added, or instructions for defensive jinxes that actually make your ears fall off...Well, in the main the perpetrators are just people like Mundungus Fletcher, who've never done an honest day's work in their lives and are taking advantage of how frightened everybody is, but every now and then something really nasty turns up. The other day Arthur confiscated a box of cursed sneakoscopes that were almost certainly planted by a Death Eater. So you see, it's a very important job, and I tell him it's just silly to miss dealing with spark plugs and toasters and all the rest of that Muggle rubbish." Mrs. Weasley ended her speech with a stern look, as if it had been Harry suggesting that it was natural to miss spark plugs

"Is Mr. Weasley still at work?" Harry asked.

"Yes, he is. As a matter of fact, he's a tiny bit late...He said he'd be back around midnight...". she looked at her clock.

"How're things with you and Bill?" asked Harry, looking at me.

I grinned. "Things are great. We've decided to have our wedding

next summer."

Harry smiled. "That's fantastic!"

"He's coming!" Mrs. Weasley said.

And sure enough, a moment later there was a knock on the back door. Mrs. Weasley jumped up and hurried to it; with one hand on the doorknob and her face pressed against the wood she called softly, "Arthur, is that you?"

"Yes," came Mr. Weasley's weary voice. "But I would say that even if I were a Death Eater, dear. Ask the question!"

"Oh, honestly..."

"Molly!"

"All right, all right...What is your dearest ambition?"

"To find out how airplanes stay up."

Mrs. Weasley nodded and turned the doorknob, but apparently Mr. Weasley was holding tightto it on the other side, because the door remained firmly shut.

"Molly! I've got to ask you your question first!"

I tried not to giggle. Because they did this every night, I had overheard the questions and answers. I thought they were adorable.

"Arthur, really, this is just silly..."

"What do you like me to call you when we're alone together?"

Harry blushed a little and he hastily gulped soup, clattering his spoon as loudly as he could against the bowl.

"Mollywobbles," whispered a mortified Mrs. Weasley into the crack at the edge of the door.

"Correct," said Mr. Weasley. "Now you can let me in."

Mrs. Weasley opened the door. "I still don't see why we have to go through that every time you come home," said Mrs. Weasley, still pink in the face as she helped her husband out of his cloak. "I mean, a Death Eater might have forced the answer out of you before impersonating you!"

"I know, dear, but it's Ministry procedure, and I have to set an example. Something smells good...onion soup?"

Mr. Weasley turned hopefully in the direction of the table.

"Harry! We didn't expect you until morning!"

They shook hands, and Mr. Weasley dropped into the chair beside Harry as Mrs. Weasley set a bowl of soup in front of him too.

"Thanks, Molly. It's been a tough night. Some idiot's started selling Metamorph-Medals. Just sling them around your neck and you'll be able to change your appearance at will. A hundred thousand disguises, all for ten Galleons!"

"And what really happens when you put them on?" I asked with interest.

"Mostly you just turn a fairly unpleasant orange color, but a couple of people have also sprouted tentacle like warts all over their bodies. As if St. Mungo's didn't have enough to do already!"

"It sounds like the sort of thing Fred and George would find funny," said Mrs. Weasley hesitantly. "Are you sure...?"

"Of course I am!" said Mr. Weasley. "The boys wouldn't do anything like that now, not when people are desperate for protection!"

"So is that why you're late, Metamorph-Medals?"

"No, we got wind of a nasty backfiring jinx down in Elephant and Castle, but luckily the Magical Law Enforcement Squad had sorted it out by the time we got there..."

Harry stifled a yawn behind his hand.

"Bed," said an undeceived Mrs. Weasley at once. "I've got Fred and George's room all ready for you, you'll have it to yourself."

"Why, where are they?"

"Oh, they're in Diagon Alley, sleeping in the little flat over their joke shop as they're so busy," said Mrs. Weasley. "I must say, I didn't approve at first, but they do seem to have a bit of a flair for business! Come on, dear, your trunks already up there."

I stood up. "I think I'll go to bed too, I'm a bit tired."

Mrs. Weasley nodded. "Not with Bill." she said sternly.

I pouted and Mrs. Weasley sighed. "Fine, just tonight."

I grinned and pounded up the stairs. "Night Harry!"

"Night Fawn."

I opened the door to find Bill sleeping. I climbed in next to him and he woke up. "Huh? Fawn?"

"Shhh, your mum said I could sleep here tonight." I said.

Bill smiled and pulled me close as we fell asleep.

~31~ O.W.L.S

I woke up the next morning to find the bed empty. Bill must be at work already.

I quickly got ready and went downstairs to find Mrs. Weasley cleaning up some dishes.

"Morning Mrs. Weasley." I said.

"Morning, dear."

"How was your night?" I asked, making myself some tea.

"It was fine, and yours?"

"It was good."

Mrs. Weasley raised her eyebrows. "And by good you mean?"

"I mean I slept well." I said with a chuckle.

Mrs. Weasley smiled and Hermione came downstairs with a large bruise on her eye.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Fred and George's invention." she said.

Hermione sat down and Mrs. Weasley quickly left and came back with a copy of The Healer's Helpmate open at "Bruises, Cuts, and Abrasions.

We kept trying to remove Hermione's bruise, but it wouldn't budge. After ten minutes Harry and Ron came down and Mrs. Weasley and I were becoming anxious.

"This has always worked before, I just can't understand it."

"It'll be Fred and George's idea of a funny joke, making sure it can't come off," said Ginny.

"But it's got to come off!" squeaked Hermione. "I can't go around looking like this forever!"

"You won't, dear, we'll find an antidote, don't worry," said Mrs. Weasley soothingly.

Hermione jumped up and started walking round and round the kitchen, twisting her fingers together.

"Mrs. Weasley, Fawn, you're quite, quite sure no owls have arrived this morning?"

"Yes, dear, I'd have noticed," said Mrs. Weasley patiently. "But it's barely nine, there's still plenty of time..."

"I know I messed up Ancient Runes," muttered Hermione feverishly, "I definitely made at least one serious mistranslation. And the Defense Against the Dark Arts practical was no good at all. I thought Transfiguration went all right at the time, but looking back..."

"Hermione, will you shut up, you're not the only one who's nervous!" barked Ron. "And when you've got your eleven 'Outstanding' OWLs..."

"Don't, don't, don't!" said Hermione, flapping her hands hysterically. "I know I've failed everything!"

"Don't worry I'm sure you all did...." I began, but my words were drowned out my Hermione screaming.

Hermione was pointing through the kitchen window. Three black specks were clearly visible in the sky, growing larger all the time.

"They're definitely owls," said Ron hoarsely, jumping up to join Hermione at the window.

"And there are three of them," said Harry, hastening to her other side

"One for each of us," said Hermione in a terrified whisper. "Oh no...oh no...oh no..."

She gripped both Harry and Ron tightly around the elbows

The owls were flying directly at the Burrow, three handsome tawnies, each of which, it became clear as they flew lower over the path leading up to the house, was carrying a large square envelope.

"Oh no!" squealed Hermione

Mrs. Weasley squeezed past them and opened the kitchen window. One, two, three, the owls soared through it and landed on the table in a neat line. All three of them lifted their right legs.

Nobody in the kitchen spoke as the three friends opened their letters. Ron and Harry looked fairly happy as they read, but Hermione was very silent.

"Only failed Divination and History of Magic, and who cares about them?" Ron said happily to Harry.

"It's as if I'm not even here." I said loudly.

But they didn't hear me.

"Here...swap..." Ron said to Harry.

They switched their grades and looked at them.

"Knew you'd be top at Defense Against the Dark Arts," said Ron, punching Harry on the shoulder. "We've done all right, haven't we?"

"Well done!" said Mrs. Weasley proudly, ruffling Ron's hair. "Seven OWLs, that's more than Fred and George got together!"

"Hermione?" said Ginny tentatively, for Hermione still hadn't turned around. "How did you do?"

"I — not bad," said Hermione in a small voice

"Oh, come off it," said Ron, striding over to her and whipping her

results out of her hand. "Yep— nine 'Outstandings' and one 'Exceeds Expectations' at Defense Against the Dark Arts." He looked down at her, half-amused, half-exasperated. "You're actually disappointed, aren't you?"

Hermione shook her head, but Harry and I laughed.

~32~ Harry's Suspicious About Draco

When Harry's birthday came along, it wasn't as happy as we would have hoped. Sirius, Remus, Damon, Lucas and Finley brought lot's of grim news.

"There have been another couple of dementor attacks," Remus announced, as Mrs. Weasley passed him a large slice of birthday cake. "And they've found Igor Karkaroff's body in a shack up north. The Dark Mark had been set over it...well, frankly, I'm surprised he stayed alive for even a year after deserting the Death Eaters; Sirius's brother, Regulus, only managed a few days as far as I can remember."

"Yes, well," said Mrs. Weasley, frowning, "perhaps we should talk about something diff..."

"Did you hear about Florean Fortescue, Remus?" asked Bill. "The man who ran....."

"....the ice-cream place in Diagon Alley?" Harry interrupted. "He used to give me free ice creams. What's happened to him?"

"Dragged off, by the look of his place." said Sirius.

"Why?" asked Ron, while Mrs. Weasley pointedly glared at Bill.

"Who knows? He must've upset them somehow." said Damon "He was a good man, Florean."

"Let's switch the topic...." I began but I was interrupted by Mr. Weasley.

"Talking of Diagon Alley," he said, "looks like Ollivander's gone too."

"The wandmaker?" said Ginny, looking startled.

"That's the one. Shop's empty. No sign of a struggle. No one knows whether he left voluntarily or was kidnapped."

"But what'll people do for wands?"

"They'll make do with other makers," said Remus. "But Ollivander was the best, and if the other side have got him it's not so good for us."

I sighed and leaned back in the sofa I was sitting in. Bill placed his hand on top of mine and squeezed.

On the next Saturday, we decided we'd all go to Diagon Ally to get the children's new books. When we arrived, we were glad to see Hagrid there.

"Hi Hagrid!" I said happily.

Hagrid gave me a bone-crushing hug. "Hi Fawn."

Diagon Ally was looking grim, and it made me feel depressed, as I saw all the stores and shops that were boarded up.

"Molly, it doesn't make sense for all of us to go to Madam Malkin's," said Mr. Weasley. "Why don't those three go with Hagrid and Fawn, and we can go to Flourish and Blotts and get everyone's schoolbooks?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Weasley anxiously, clearly torn between a desire to finish the shopping quickly and the wish to stick together in a pack. "Hagrid, Fawn do you think —?"

"Don't fret, they'll be fine with me, Molly," said Hagrid soothingly, waving an airy hand the size of a dustbin lid.

I smiled at Mrs. Weasley. "It's alright Mrs. Weasley we'll keep an eye on them."

Mrs. Weasley nodded, scurrying off toward Flourish and Blotts with her husband and Ginny while Harry, Ron, Hermione, Hagrid and I set off for Madam Malkin's.

"Migh' be a bit of a squeeze in there with all of us," said Hagrid, stopping outside Madam Malkin's and bending down to peer through the window. "Fawn and I'll stand guard outside, all right?"

Harry, Ron and Hermione walked into the shop while Hagrid and I stood outside, looking around the streets. People were rushing past, looking anxious and scared.

"So, how are ye?" Hagrid asked.

"Good, and you?"

"Alrigh'"

After a few minutes, the door of the shop opened and I turned, thinking it would be Harry, Ron and Hermione but I was surprised to see Draco and his mum.

"Aunt Fawn?" Draco said, looking at me.

I smiled. "Hello Draco."

Draco hesitated, glancing at his mother, but then he stepped forward and gave me a tight hug.

"Had a good summer?" I asked.

Draco shrugged. I noticed he clutched the sleeve of his left arm so that it wouldn't slip back.

"Did you hurt yourself?" I asked.

He shook his head frantically.

His mother stepped forward. "Fawn?"

I looked at my sisters face. It was the first time I'd seen Narcissa ever since I learned that we were sisters.

"Hello." I said tensely.

She looked at me. "You-you're beautiful."

I gave a tight smile. "Thanks."

Narcissa looked like she still wanted to talk, but she stepped backwards. "Have a good day."

I nodded. "You as well."

I watched as they walked down the street. Draco looked behind his shoulder and I could see pain in his eyes as he stuck out his left arm, as if he was trying to tell me something. I couldn't figure out what he could be trying to say to me. I was distracted when Harry, Ron and Hermione came out of the shop.

"Got ev'rything?" asked Hagrid brightly when they reappeared at his side.

"Just about," said Harry. "Did you see the Malfoys?"

"Yeah," said Hagrid, unconcerned. "Bu' they wouldn' dare make trouble in the middle o' Diagon Alley, Harry. Don' worry about them."

I noticed that the three of them cast looks at each other, but I decided not to question it.

During the last week of the summer holidays, I noticed Harry always being distracted or thinking about something else.

"Doing alright Harry?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Yea."

Harry stopped for a moment. "Hey Fawn, can I talk to you about something?"

I nodded. "Sure."

He quickly told me all about what he saw Draco doing at Borgin's and Burkes.

"I think.... I think he has the Dark Mark." said Harry.

I laughed. "Harry he's still sixteen I-"

I stopped, remembering how Draco was hiding his left arm and how he was holding out while walking away. I remembered the sadness in his eyes.

"Oh my god you're right!" I said.

Harry blinked. "I am? I mean....wait I am?"

I nodded. "He is! But Harry, you cannot tell anyone. Not Ron. Not Hermione. No one. Understand?"

Harry hesitated.

"Harry do. You. Understand?"

Harry finally nodded. "Ok, ok. But why?"

I sighed. "Draco doesn't want to be a Death Eater."

Harry scoffed and I glared at him. "You don't know him like I do Harry Potter."

Harry held up his hands. "Sorry."

~ ~ ~

A few days later, we were at Kings Cross. I had my arms around Bill.

"I'm going to miss you." I said, kissing him.

"Me too darling."

"Blargh." someone said. .

We turned to see Ron.

Hermione hit him. "Don't *'blargh'* Ronald!"

Ron shrugged. Bill and I rolled our eyes and laughed.

"Honestly, he'll never grow up." said Bill.

I chuckled and kissed him again.

"Have a good term!" he said to everyone.

We all climbed the train. Ron and Hermione went to do their prefect duties.

"Fancy finding a compartment?" Harry asked Ginny and I.

"Can't, I said I'd meet Dean. See you later." said Ginny, flouncing away.

I tried not to laugh at Harry's disappointed face.

"It's alright..." I began, but I was cut off short by someone calling to us.

"Hi Harry! Hi Professor Black!"

We turned to see Neville walking towards us.

"Neville!" said Harry.

I smiled. "Hello Neville. Oh Hi Luna!"

"Hello Harry and Professor Black." said Luna, walking right behind Neville.

"Luna hi how are you?" asked Harry.

"Very well thank you." she replied, clutching a magazine to her chest.

"Quibbler still going strong then?" asked Harry.

Luna nodded happily.

"Let's go find a compartment." I said.

We made our way down the train. Students were straining their neck to stare at us as we walked. We finally found an empty compartment.

"They're even staring at us?" asked Neville, indicating himself and Luna.

"They're staring at you because you were at the Ministry too." Harry said, heaving his bad on the luggage rack.

"Your little adventure was all over the Daily Prophet." I said, heaving my bag too.

I let the kids have their own private conversation as I sat down and spaced out, being in my own world, but my thoughts were interrupted by girls outside our compartment door. I looked to see Romilda Vane and some other girls.

Romilda opened the door and stepped in.

"Hi Harry, I'm Romilda Vane. Why don't you join us in our compartment? You don't have to sit with *them*." she said, indicating Neville, who's bottom was sticking out from under a seat as he searched for his toad Trevor, and Luna who was wearing her famous Spectrespecs. "You can sit with us too Professor Starling, er, I mean Black."

"No thank you Miss Vane." I said coolly. I never liked Romilda much.

"They're my friends." said Harry coldly.

"Oh." Romilda said, looking surprised. "Oh, ok then."

She left.

"People expect you to have cooler friends than us." Luna told Harry.

Harry shook his head. "You are cool. None of them were at the Ministry. They didn't fight with me."

"That's a very nice thing to say." she said smiling.

~33~ Slughorn

After a while, Hermione and Ron came back from Prefect duty.

"I wish the lunch trolley would show up. I'm starving." said Ron. "Hi Neville, hi Luna.."

He turned to Harry and I. "Guess what? Malfoy's not doing prefect duty, he's just sitting in his compartment with the other Slytherin's, we saw him when we passed."

Harry sat up straight, and I thought this was interesting too.

"What did he do when he saw you?" asked Harry.

"The usual." said Ron, pointing the middle finger.

"Ron." I said warningly.

"What? You do it all the time!"

I flushed as Harry snickered. "I'm an adult, besides, at Hogwarts I'm your Professor. Don't do it in front of me."

"I wonder what he's doing." Harry said, ignoring me and Ron bickering.

"I could go check if you'd like. I want to know why he's not doing his job anyway." I said.

Harry nodded. I left the compartment and managed to find them quickly. Draco was laying down with his head on Pansy Parkinson's lap. Crabbe was reading a comic book and Goyle and Blaise Zabini were talking with Draco and Parkinson. I opened the sliding door. "Hello Draco."

Draco sat up smiling. "Hi Aunt Fawn, come join us."

Parkinson didn't look pleased as Draco forced her to move to make some space for me.

I sat down and said hello to everyone.

"Hello Professor." Crabbe, Parkinson and Goyle muttered.

Blaise looked much happier to see me than the other three. "Hi Professor Black. Had a good summer?"

I nodded. "Very nice, and yourself?"

"It was alright."

"Why aren't you doing prefect duty Draco?" I asked, turning to Draco. "I saw the others doing their job."

Draco shrugged. "I forgot."

I knew he was lying but I didn't have the chance to say anything. The sliding door opened and a small third year Ravenclaw came in.

"Hi, I'm to give these to Professor Black and Blaise Zabini?" she said, holding out two scrolls of parchment.

I smiled and took mine. "Thank you Miss. Rose."

Blaise took his. "Thanks."

"What is it?" asked Draco.

I opened mine and read.

Fawn,
I would be delighted if you would join me for a bite of lunch in compartment C.

Sincerely,

Professor H. E. F. Slughorn.

"Invitation to have lunch with a new Professor." I said.

"You too?" Crabbe asked Blaise.

Blaise nodded. "Yeah, what's he going to teach?"

I shrugged. "I suppose Defence, that's the only spot open isn't it?"

Blaise and I walked out of the compartment and made our way to Slughorn.

I opened the sliding door. "Hello Professor." I said smiling.

Slughorn was a large man and took up most of the space.

"Fawn Black! It's a pleasure to meet you!" he said, shaking my hand.

He greeted Blaise as I sat down next to Ginny. I was curious as to why she was there. I looked around. I recognized Cormac McLaggen and Marcus Belby. I waved to them and they smiled back.

Marcus was a very nice boy, I've always liked him. But McLaggen was.....creepy, let's put it that way.

"Fawn, I was so pleased to hear that there was another professor on the train! And after everything I read in the Daily Prophet, I knew I had to meet you." said Slughorn.

I felt uncomfortable and I suddenly felt Ginny's hand on my knee. She could feel this was getting awkward.

After a bit, Harry and Neville walked in.

"Harry m'boy!" said Slughorn standing up and greeting him. "And you must be Neville!"

Neville nodded, looking scared, but he looked a bit happier to see that I was there. I gave him a reassuring smile. Harry and Neville sat down in the two remaining seats.

"Now, do you know everyone?" Slughorn asked Harry and Neville. "Blaise Zabini is in your year, of course."

Harry and Neville ignored Blaise, and Blaise did the same.

"This is Cormac McLaggen, perhaps you've come across each other? No?"

McLaggen raised a hand, and Harry and Neville nodded back at him.

"And this is Marcus Belby, I don't know whether —?"

Belby gave a strained smile.

"And this charming young lady tells me she knows you!" Slughorn finished.

Ginny grimaced at Harry and Neville from behind Slughorn's back and I chuckled.

"Of course you know Fawn so there's no need for introductions here."

I grinned and they grinned back.

"Well now, this is most pleasant," said Slughorn cozily. "A chance to get to know you all a little better. Here, take a napkin. I've packed my own lunch; the trolley, as I remember it, is heavy on licorice wands, and a poor old man's digestive system isn't quite up to such things...Pheasant, Belby?"

Belby started and accepted what looked like half a cold pheasant.

"I was just telling young Marcus here that I had the pleasure of teaching his Uncle Damocles," Slughorn told Harry and Neville, now passing around a basket of rolls. "Outstanding wizard, outstanding, and his Order of Merlin most well-deserved. Do you see much of your uncle, Marcus?"

Belby had just taken a large mouthful of pheasant; in his haste to answer Slughorn he swallowed too fast, turned purple, and began to choke.

"Anapneo," said Slughorn calmly, pointing his wand at Belby, whose airway seemed to clear at once.

"Not...not much of him, no," gasped Belby, his eyes streaming.

"Well, of course, I daresay he's busy," said Slughorn, looking questioningly at Belby. "I doubt he invented the Wolfsbane Potion without considerable hard work!"

"I suppose..." said Belby, who seemed afraid to take another bite of pheasant until he was sure that Slughorn had finished with him. "Er...he and my dad don't get on very well, you see, so I don't really know much about....."

His voice tailed away as Slughorn gave him a cold smile and turned to McLaggen instead.

I was starting to dislike Slughorn.

Slughorn talked to MacLaggen and Blaise and then he turned to Neville, and it was super awkward and I felt bad for Neville. Talking about his parents being driven to insanity by Bellatrix was a tough topic for him.

Then he turned to me. "Now Fawn, you've been teaching for a while at Hogwarts I heard?"

I nodded. "Yes sir,"

"Oho, there's no reason to call me sir just because I'm older than you! We're colleagues now!"

I smiled.

"And I hear one of your sisters is Bellatrix Lestrange?"

I stayed silent.

"Of course, I can't imagine you actually like her?" he asked interestedly.

I shook my head. "No I don't."

He smiled and turned to Harry.

"And now," said Slughorn, shifting massively in his seat with the air of a compere introducing his star act. "Harry Potter! Where to begin? I feel I barely scratched the surface when we met over the summer!" He contemplated Harry for a moment as though he was a particularly large and succulent piece of pheasant, then said, "'The Chosen One,' they're calling you now!"

Harry said nothing. Belby, McLaggen, and Blaise were all staring at him.

"Of course," said Slughorn, watching Harry closely, "there have been rumors for years...I remember when...well — after that terrible night — Lily — James — and you survived — and the word was that you must have powers beyond the ordinary —"

Balise gave a tiny little cough that was clearly supposed to indicate amused skepticism. An angry voice burst out from behind Slughorn.

"Yeah, Zabini, because you're so talented...at posing..." said Ginny.

I snorted and Slughorn chuckled.

"You want to be careful, Blaise! I saw this young lady perform the most marvelous Bat-Bogey Hex as I was passing her carriage! I wouldn't cross her!" he said.

Blaise looked contemptuous.

"Anyway," said Slughorn, turning back to Harry. "Such rumors this summer. Of course, one doesn't know what to believe, the Prophet has been known to print inaccuracies, make mistakes, but there seems little doubt, given the number of witnesses, that there was quite a disturbance at the Ministry and that you were there in the thick of it all!"

Harry nodded but didn't say anything.

Slughorn beamed at him. "So modest, so modest, no wonder Dumbledore is so fond — you were there, then? But the rest of the stories — so sensational, of course, one doesn't know quite what to believe — this fabled prophecy, for instance —"

"We never heard a prophecy," said Neville, turning geranium pink as he said it.

"That's right," said Ginny staunchly. "Neville, Professor Black and I were there too."

I nodded. "All this 'Chosen One' rubbish is just the Prophet making things up as usual."

"You two were there too?" Slughorn asked Ginny and Neville. I knew he knew I was there since it was all over the Daily Prophet.

"Yes...well...it is true that the Prophet often exaggerates, of course..." Slughorn said, sounding a little disappointed. "I remember dear Gwenog telling me (Gwenog Jones, I mean, of course, Captain of the Holyhead Harpies) —"

I lost track of what he was saying since I got bored after he stopped talking about Harry and the others. After a bit, Slughorn looked at the sun setting.

"My goodness look at the time! You'd better all go get changed." he said.

We all left as quickly as we could.

"So how did you get an invite?" I asked Ginny.

"Zacharias Smith was being annoying and wouldn't stop asking me questions about what happened at the Ministry, so I jinxed him. When Slughorn saw me, I thought I'd get detention, but he just said it was impressive and asked me to come for lunch." she grinned. "Mad eh?"

She continued walking down to her compartment while I followed Neville and Harry. Blaise was walking ahead of us. He had given me a quick smile before leaving Slughorn's compartment.

"Hey uh, I'm going to use the bathroom." said Harry.

"Alright."

~ ~ ~

AN

I just wanted to let you guys know, I see ALL your comments and even though I don't really reply to them, I always read them and absolutely love them and I enjoy all the funny and kind things you say. Much love besties <3

~34~ Harry's Missing On The Train

While Harry went to the bathroom, Neville and I went to our compartment. Harry never showed up and we all assumed he had left without us, but after we all got off the train and we still couldn't find him, I decided to go check the train again.

"I'll go see if I can find Harry," I said. "You go on, you don't wan to be late for the feast. I'll send Professor Dumbledore a Patronus to tell him what I'm doing."

The others left and I quickly went on the train again. I saw Tonks checking the train too.

"Hello Tonks." I said.

She looked and and gave me a slight smile. "Hello Fawn, what are you doing?"

"Looking for Harry."

"Oh?"

I nodded. "I never saw him get off the train, let's check together."

We went down the train together and checked the compartments. I found one with the blinds drawn. The I remembered that this was the one that Draco was sitting in, and Harry had his Invisibility Cloak with him.

I opened the compartment, pointed my wand out and said "Accio Cloak!"

The cloak lifted from the ground and onto my hand and I saw Harry laying on the floor, frozen, looking at me with wide eyes. His nose looked broken and it was bleeding.

I pointed my wand at him. "Finite!"

Harry unfroze and sat up with a groan. I grabbed his hand and pulled him up.

"I've got him Tonks!" I said, just as the train began to move.

We all jumped off. Tonks and I landed smoothly but Harry almost fell and Tonks caught him.

"Careful."

"Thanks."

"I'd better get going." said Tonks.

We said goodbye to Tonks and walked to the castle.

"I'll just send a Patronus to tell the Professors I've got you,"

After I sent one, I turned to Harry.

"I could fix your nose."

Harry nodded and I pointed my wand at his face and said, "Episky!"

He smiled and felt his nose. "Great thanks!"

"So, what were you doing?" I asked, as we walked to Hogwarts.

"Um, Malfoy broke my nose."

"Right, and why?"

He looked down. "I was listening in on his conversation."

I sighed. "Harry don't do that, I'm dealing with Draco alright?"

Harry sighed. "Ok ok I'm sorry."

We finally reached the Hogwarts gates and Harry pushed them.

"It's locked," I said. "New Security's been tightened a hundredfold

this summer. We'll just wait for someone to come, I sent that in my Patronus too."

We stood and waited.

"Couldn't you open it?" Harry asked.

I shook my head. "Only Professor Dumbledore can open it from the outside."

We saw Snape walking down to us.

"Well, well, well," sneered Snape, taking out his wand and tapping the padlock once, so that the chains snaked backward and the gates creaked open. "Nice of you to turn up, Potter, although you have evidently decided that the wearing of school robes would detract from your appearance."

"I couldn't change, I didn't have my —" Harry began, but Snape cut across him.

"Let us go." he said to us.

"I meant Hagrid to get the message," I said, following Snape.

"Hagrid was late for the start-of-term feast, just like Potter here, so I took it instead." said Snape, standing back to allow Harry to pass him.

The three of us walked into the castle.

"Fifty points from Gryffindor for lateness, I think," said Snape. "And, let me see, another twenty for your Muggle attire. You know, I don't believe any House has ever been in negative figures this early in the term: We haven't even started pudding. You might have set a record, Potter."

"Professor Snape," I said. "We don't need to take any points away from Harry, another student broke Harry's nose purposely."

"You may take points away from whoever did this when you see them Professor Black, but Potter deserves the points I've taken

away."

I narrowed my eyes but said nothing.

"I suppose you wanted to make an entrance, did you?" Snape continued to Harry. "And with no flying car available you decided that bursting into the Great Hall halfway through the feast ought to create a dramatic effect."

I opened my mouth to speak but Snape glared at me and I shut my mouth.

"No cloak Potter," Snape said. "You can walk in so that everyone sees you, which is what you wanted, I'm sure."

Harry turned sharply on his heels and strode into the Great Hall.

~35~ Draco's Problem

After dinner, I quickly went around looking for Draco. I found him and called him into my office. When we sat down, I spoke. "Draco, why on earth would you break Harry Potter's nose!"

He scowled. "So you just believe everything that Potter says?"

I said nothing and just kept looking at him.

"Alright fine, yes I did." he crossed his arms. "Happy?"

"No I'm not," I said. "Why did you do it?"

"He was listening in on my conversation, it was private."

I sighed. "Yes what he did was wrong, but you shouldn't have broken his nose, I'll be giving you detention for that."

Draco groaned.

"I'm sorry Draco but breaking someone's nose...."

He sighed. "I know I know,"

I looked at the clock. "You'd better go, I don't want you to be too late."

He nodded and left. I placed my head in my hands and rubbed my eyes. I had to find away to help Draco.

I was the *only* one who could help him.

~ ~ ~

Everything was going pretty smoothly throughout the term, until the first Hogsmeade trip of the year. I was with Minnie in her office, and we were discussing my wedding with Bill.

"Ginny is going to be a flower girl, and Bill was thinking of making

Charlie his best man." I said.

Minnie was about to reply when the door burst open and Hagrid rushed in, carrying Katie Bell. "I don't know what happened to her, but Harry, Ron, Hermione and another girl Leanne saw what happened. We think Katie's been cursed."

Minnie gasped. "Take Miss. Bell to the hospital wing. Fawn, come with me."

I followed her out of the office and we rushed out of the castle. As we rushed out into the snow, we spotted Harry, Ron, Hermione and Leanne.

"Hagrid says you four saw what happened to Katie Bell — upstairs to my office at once, please!" Minnie said. "What's that you're holding, Potter?"

"It's the thing she touched," said Harry, holding out a scarf.

"Good lord," said Professor McGonagall, looking alarmed as she took the necklace from Harry. "No, no, Filch, they're with us!" she added hastily, as Filch came shuffling eagerly across the entrance hall holding his Secrecy Sensor aloft. "Take this necklace to Professor Snape at once, but be sure not to touch it, keep it wrapped in the scarf!"

We all followed Minnie to her office, and when we reached there, Minnie and I whipped around to face Harry, Ron, Hermione and a sobbing Leanne.

"What happened?" I asked sharply.

Haltingly, and with many pauses while she attempted to control her crying, Leanne told us how Katie had gone to the bathroom in the Three Broomsticks and returned holding an unmarked package, how Katie had seemed a little odd, and how they had argued about the advisability of agreeing to deliver unknown objects, the argument culminating a the tussle over the parcel, which tore open. At this point, Leanne was so overcome, there was no getting another word out of her.

"All right," said Minnie kindly "go up to the hospital wing, please, Leanne, and get Madam Pomfrey to give you something for shock."

When she left, Minnie and I turned back to the other three.

"Why," I said. "Is it always you three?"

"Believe me Professors," said Ron. "We've been asking ourselves the same question for five years."

"What happened when Katie touched the necklace?" asked Minnie.

"She rose up in the air," said Harry. "and then began to scream, and collapsed. Professor, can I see Professor Dumbledore, please?"

"The headmaster is away until Monday, Potter," said Minnie, looking surprised.

"Away?" Harry repeated angrily.

"Yes, Potter, away!" said Minnie tartly "But anything you have to say about this horrible business can be said to us, I'm sure!"

He paused. "I think Draco Malfoy gave Katie that necklace, Professor."

Ron rubbed his nose in apparent embarrassment and Hermione shuffled her feet as though quite keen to put a bit of distance between herself and Harry. I believed Harry, but I couldn't say anything. If I did, Draco would die and his whole family would be killed.

"That is a very serious accusation, Potter," said Minnie, after a shocked pause. "Do you have any proof?"

I tried to give Harry a look of warning, but he ignored me.

"No," said Harry, "but..." and he told her about following Malfoy to Borgin and Burkes and the conversation they had over-heard between him and Mr. Borgin.

When he had finished speaking, Minnie looked slightly confused.

"Malfoy took something to Borgin and Burkes for repair?"

"No, Professor, he just wanted Borgin to tell him how to mend something, he didn't have It with him. But that's not the point, the thing is that he bought something at the same time, and I think it was that necklace...."

"You saw Malfoy leaving the shop with a similar package?"

"No, Professor, he told Borgin to keep it in the shop for him-"

Harry, Ron and Hermione began arguing, as if Minnie and I weren't there, and Minnie had enough.

"That's enough!" said Minnie. "Potter, I appreciate you telling me this, but we cannot point the finger of blame at Mr. Malfoy purely because he visited the shop where this necklace might have been purchased. The same is probably true of hundreds of people, and in any case, we have put stringent security measures in place this year. I do not believe that necklace can possibly have entered this school without our knowledge."

Harry tried to speak but Minnie cut him off. "And what is more, Mr. Malfoy was not in Hogsmeade today."

Harry gasped. "How do you know Professor?"

"Because he was doing detention with me in the morning. He has now failed to complete his Transfiguration homework twice in a row. So, thank you for telling me your suspicions, Potter," she said as she marched past them, "but I need to go up to the hospital wing now to check on Katie Bell. Good day to you all."

She held open the office door, and the three left, Harry looking angry. After I checked on Katie, I went to my office to think.

If Draco was with Minnie today, how did he give the necklace to Katie? Who was the necklace for? Why did Voldemort want Draco to give it to a student? A random student too. I had no idea why Katie, of all people, would be a part of this. With what Leanne said, I was sure Katie was Imperioused before she left the bathroom. I groaned as I tried to think. I knew Draco wouldn't tell me the truth,

so there was no point asking.

I flopped into my chair and watched the snow drift gently into the grounds.

~36~ Ron & Hermione's Feud

The next morning, Katie was removed to go to St. Mungo's, and everyone had heard that Katie was cursed, but everyone seemed confused with the details. Since Draco wasn't taking History of Magic anymore, I could only see him during mealtimes and sometimes when he was walking around the castle, but I noticed that he was very silent, and barely talked to anyone. He was looking pale, and ill. He would only give me small smiles in passing, but he stopped visiting me and seemed to be almost avoiding me.

A few days later, I was invited to Slughorn's Christmas party.

"I do hope you join us!" said Slughorn, when he handed me and Snape our invitations when we were on our break in the staffroom.

"I'll be there Horac." I said with a forced smile.

Snape merely grimaced and looked at his invitation.

When Slughorn left, I turned to Snape. "Are you going Severus?"

"Most likely."

I was glad to hear that Harry and Hermione were invited too.

A few days after that, was the Quidditch match between Gryffindor and Slytherin. I sat in the stands with Filius and Pomona and the teams walked out onto the pitch. The whistle sounded, and everyone shot into the air.

"Well, there they go, and I think we're all surprised to see the team that Potter's put together this year. Many thought, given Ronald Weasley's patchy performance as Keeper last year, that he might be off the team, but of course, a close personal friendship with the Captain does help..."

I bristled. I very much disliked Zacharias Smith, who was

commentating the match.

"Oh, and here comes Slytherin's first attempt on goal, it's Urquhart streaking down the pitch and-"

I sat forward in my seat.

"Weasley saves it, well, he's bound to get lucky sometimes, I suppose..."

I cheered with the other Gryffindor's.

"Go Ron!" I yelled. "You got this!"

"Calm down Fawn!" said Pomona laughing.

"He's my soon to be brother!"

With half an hour of the game gone, Gryffindor were leading sixty points to zero, Ron having made some truly spectacular saves, some by the very tips of his gloves, and Ginny having scored four of Gryffindor's six goals. This effectively stopped Zacharias wondering loudly whether the two Weasleys were only there because Harry liked them, and he started on Peakes and Coote instead.

"Of course, Coote isn't really the usual build for a Beater," said Zacharias loftily, "they've generally got a bit more muscle-"

"Hit a Bludger at him!" I heard Harry yell at Coote.

Coote grinned and flew off to hit a Bludger at an oncoming Slytherin player.

It seemed as though Gryffindor could do no wrong. Again and again they scored, and again and again, at the other end of the pitch, Ron saved goals with apparent ease. He was actually smiling now, and when the crowd greeted a particularly good save with a rousing chorus of the old favorite "Weasley Is Our King," he pretended to conduct them from on high.

I saw Harper collide with Harry and we all booed, but Madam Hooch's back was turned and she didn't see, and when she turned

around, Harper had already sped off. Harry looked angry and continued looking for the snitch.

"And I think Harper of Slytherin's seen the Snitch!" said Zacharias Smith through his megaphone. "Yes, he's certainly seen something Potter hasn't!"

I gasped as I saw Harper speeding towards the Snitch.

"Come on Harry!" I muttered.

Harry sped off after Harper. Harry yelled something that I couldn't hear, but whatever he said, it made Harper look back and he fumbled with the Snitch. Harry made a great swipe and caught it.

I leapt up from my seat and started jumping around and cheering. "YES HARRY. HE CAUGHT THE SNITCH!"

The whole Gryffindor team hugged him but Ginny flew straight past them until, with an almighty crash, she collided with the commentators podium. As the crowd shrieked and laughed, the Gryffindor team landed beside the wreckage of wood under which Zacharias was feebly stirring; I heard Ginny saying blithely to an irate Minnie "Forgot to brake, Professor, sorry."

I burst out laughing as I watched Harry hug Ginny and turn a bright red.

I walked back into the castle with Filius, Pomona and Minnie.

"Mr. Weasley has certainly improved hasn't he." said Minnie happily.

"He really has!" I said. "Did you see how happy he looked?"

~ ~ ~

Christmas was arriving fast, and Ron and Hermione seemed to be having a little feud. I didn't understand why, until I saw Ron kissing Lavender in the hallway one day. With my wand, I slid them apart.

"Not in the hallway please Mr. Weasley and Miss. Brown." I said irritably.

"You kiss Bill all the time!" said Ron angrily.

"Not the way you were! And certainly not this way in *public!"* I said, turning a bright red. "Please go to the common room if you want to do.... whatever it was you were doing."

I watched as they left, hand in hand. I didn't have anymore classes for the rest of the day, and I was glad to find Harry sitting in the library alone.

"Harry," I said, sitting down next to him.

"Hm?" he said looking up.

"What's going on with Ron and Hermione? I saw Ron kissing Lavender today."

Harry sighed. "Ron and Hermione had a little spat after the Quidditch game. I'm *not* getting into that. And then Lavender kissed Ron at the afterparty and Hermione got upset so now they're not speaking to each other."

I looked up and groaned. "Why does Ron have to be such an idiotic git."

Harry shrugged but dropped the subject when Hermione came and sat down.

"Hi Harry, Hi Fawn." she said.

"Hello Hermione." I said.

Hermione looked at me. "Fawn, you need to be on a lookout for girls sneaking love potions into the castle."

"What?" I said blankly.

Hermione turned to Harry. "I went into the girl's bathroom just before I came in here and there were about a dozen girls in there, including that Romilda Vane, trying to decide how to slip you a love potion. They're all hoping they're going to get you to take them to Slughorn's party, and they all seem to have bought Fred and

George's love potions, which I'm afraid to say probably work."

"Why didn't you confiscate them then?" I asked her. "You're a Prefect."

"They didn't have the potions with them in the bathroom," said Hermione scornfully, "They were just discussing tactics. As I doubt the Half-blood prince" she gave Harry's potions book a scornful look, "could dream up an antidote for a dozen different love potions at once, I'd just invite someone to go with you, that'll stop all the others thinking they've still got a chance. It's tomorrow night, they're getting desperate."

Harry had told me all about the prince's book, but I didn't know who it was or how to help.

"There isn't anyone I want to invite," mumbled Harry.

"Well, just be careful what you drink, because Romilda Vane looked like she meant business." said Hermione grimly.

"I'll keep a lookout." I promised.

"Hang on a moment," Harry said slowly. "I thought Filch had banned anything bought at Weasley's Wizard Wheezes?"

"And when has anyone ever paid attention to what Filch has banned?" asked Hermione, still concentrating on her essay.

"But I thought all the owls were being searched. So how come these girls are able to bring love potions into the school?"

"Fred and George send them disguised as perfumes and cough potions," I said. "It's part of their Owl order service."

"You two know a lot about it." said Harry.

I quickly made an excuse to finish grading some papers and left Harry and Hermione bickering over the love potions.

~37~ Christmas Party

On the day of the Christmas part, there was a great talk that Harry Potter was taking Luna Lovegood to Slughorn's party.

I was walking through the halls when I heard Peeves singing at the top of his lungs, "POTTY ASKED LOONEY TO GO TO THE PARTY! POTTY LOVESSSSS LOONEY!"

When I saw Luna in class later, I called her to stay after. "I hear you're going to the party with Harry?"

Luna nodded, beaming. "Oh yes, we're going just as friends though. It was very nice of him to ask me."

I smiled back. "Yes he is a very nice boy isn't he."

I was happy to see that Luna was happy.

That night at eight o'clock, I went to Slughorn's office. I was wearing a simple dress. Since I was a teacher, I didn't want to go overboard.

"Fawn!" Slughorn greeted. "Welcome welcome!"

There was already a lot of people, and I felt a bit uncomfortable with the crowd. I made my way to the drink table and made myself some punch.

I was surprised to see Hermione with McLaggen. Hermione said something to him and quickly rushed off. I followed to see her standing with Harry and Luna.

"What's wrong with you?" I asked, motioning to her red face.

"Oh, I've just escaped - I mean, I've just left Cormac," she said. "Under the mistletoe."

"Serves you right for coming with him." said Harry.

I stayed silent.

"I thought he'd annoy Ron most," said Hermione dispassionately. "I debated for a while about Zacharias Smith, but I thought, on the whole —"

"You considered *Smith?"* I asked, unable to stop myself.

"Yes, I did, and I'm starting to wish I'd chosen him, McLaggen makes Grawp look a gentleman. Let's go this way, we'll be able to see him coming, he's so tall..."

The four of us made our way over to the other side of the room, scooping up goblets of mead on the way, realizing too late that Professor Trelawney was standing there alone.

I quickly escaped and went around, seeing who to talk to.

I found myself being pulled by Slughorn. He put his arm around my shoulder and I saw that I was back where I was before.

"Fawn! Come join us!" he said.

Then Slughorn reached out his other arm and seemed to scoop Snape out of thin air.

"Stop skulking and come and join us, Severus!" hiccupped Slughorn happily. "I was just talking about Harry's exceptional potion-making! Some credit must go to you, of course, you taught him for five years!"

Trapped, with Slughorn's arm around his shoulders, Snape looked down his hooked nose at Harry, his black eyes narrowed. "Funny, I never had the impression that I managed to teach Potter anything at all."

I made a noise of annoyance.

"Well, then, it's natural ability!" shouted Slughorn. "You should have seen what he gave me, first lesson, Draught of Living Death- never had a student produce finer on a first attempt, I don't think even you, Severus-"

"Really?" said Snape quietly, his eyes still boring into Harry.

"Remind me what other subjects you're taking, Harry?" asked Slughorn.

"Defense Against the Dark Arts, Charms, Transfiguration, Herbology..."

"All the subjects required, in short, for an Auror," said Snape with the faintest sneer.

"Yeah, well, that's what I'd like to do," said Harry defiantly.

"And a great one you'll make too!" boomed Slughorn.

"I agree." I said, grinning at Harry.

"I don't think you should be an Auror, Harry," said Luna unexpectedly. Everybody looked at her. "The Aurors are part of the Rotfang Conspiracy, I thought everyone knew that. They're planning to bring down the Ministry of Magic from within using a combination of Dark Magic and gum disease."

I tried to not laugh, and Harry started laughing hard. I heard a small commotion and looked over to see Draco being dragged by the ear towards us by Filch.

"Professor Slughorn," wheezed Filch, his jowls aquiver and the maniacal light of mischief-detection in his bulging eyes, "I discovered this boy lurking in an upstairs corridor. He claims to have been invited to your party and to have been delayed in setting out. Did you issue him with an invitation?"

Draco pulled himself free of Filchs grip, looking furious. "All right, I wasn't invited!" he said angrily. "I was trying to gate crash, happy?"

"No, I'm not!" said Filch, a statement at complete odds with the glee on his face. "You're in trouble, you are! Didn't the headmaster say that nighttime prowling's out, unless you've got permission, didn't he, eh?"

"That's all right, Argus, that's all right," said Slughorn, waving a

hand. "It's Christmas, and it's not a crime to want to come to a party. Just this once, we'll forget any punishment; you may stay, Draco.

I watched Draco look unhappy at these words, and Snape seemed to look slightly afraid. Filch shuffled away and Draco started muttering his thanks to Slughorn.

"It's nothing, nothing," said Slughorn, waving away Malfoy's thanks. "I did know your grandfather, after all..."

"He always spoke very highly of you, sir," said Draco quickly. "Said you were the best potion-maker he'd ever known..."

Draco looked very ill and that worried me. He had dark shadows under his eyes and a distinctly grayish tinge to his skin.

Draco finally noticed me. "Aunt Fawn!" he said, looking a lot more relieved to see me.

I smiled. "Hi Draco," I pulled him into a hug.

"I'd like a word with you, Draco," said Snape suddenly.

"Now, Severus," said Slughorn, hiccuping again, "it's Christmas, don't be too hard —"

"I am his Head of House, and I shall decide how hard, or otherwise, to be," said Snape curtly. "Follow me, Draco."

They left, Snape leading the way.

~38~ Draco's Conversation with Snape

"I'll be right back Luna." said Harry.

"Alright!" said Luna cheerfully.

I sensed that Harry was going to follow Draco and Snape, and I decided to go too.

"Um, I actually need to freshen up..." I said. "Makeup."

Luna nodded.

I quickly followed Harry.

"Fawn?" he asked, when he noticed me.

"Shh, I'm coming too." I said.

Once out of the party, Harry pulled out his Invisibility Cloak and threw it on us. We ran through the corridors until we heard talking in an empty classroom.

"...cannot afford mistakes, Draco, because if you are expelled-"

"I didn't have anything to do with it, all right?"

"I hope you are telling the truth, because it was both clumsy and foolish. Already you are suspected of having a hand in it."

"Who suspects me?" said Draco angrily. "For the last time, I didn't do it, okay? That Bell girl must've had an enemy no one knows about . Don't look at me like that! I know what you're doing, I'm not stupid, but it won't work. I can stop you!"

There was a pause and then Snape said quietly, "Ah...Aunt Bellatrix has been teaching you Occlumency, I see. What thoughts are you

trying to conceal from your master, Draco?"

"I'm not trying to conceal anything from *him,* I just don't want *you* butting in!"

"So that is why you have been avoiding me this term? You have feared my interference? You realize that, had anybody else failed to come to my office when I had told them repeatedly to be there, Draco —"

"So put me in detention! Report me to Dumbledore!" jeered Draco.

There was another pause. Then Snape said, "You know perfectly well that I do not wish to do either of those things."

"You'd better stop telling me to come to your office then!"

"Listen to me," said Snape, his voice so low now that Harry and I had to push our ears very hard against the keyhole to hear. "I am trying to help you. I swore to your mother I would protect you. I made the Unbreakable Vow, Draco —"

"Looks like you'll have to break it, then, because I don't need your protection! It's my job, he gave it to me and I'm doing it, I've got a plan and it's going to work, it's just taking a bit longer than I thought it would!"

"What is your plan?"

"It's none of your business!"

"If you tell me what you are trying to do, I can assist you..."

"I have all the assistance I need, thanks, I'm not alone!"

"You were certainly alone tonight, which was foolish in the extreme, wandering the corridors without lookouts or backup, these are elementary mistakes —"

"I would've had Crabbe and Goyle with me if you hadn't put them in detention!"

"Keep your voice down!" spat Snape, for Draco's voice had risen excitedly. "If your friends Crabbe and Goyle intend to pass their Defense Against the Dark Arts O.W.L this time around, they will need to work a little harder than they are doing at pres —"

"What does it matter?" said Draco. "Defense Against the Dark Arts — its all just a joke, isn't it, an act? Like any of us need protecting against the Dark Arts —"

"It is an act that is crucial to success, Draco!" said Snape. "Where do you think I would have been all these years, if I had not known how to act? Now listen to me! You are being incautious, wandering around at night, getting yourself caught, and if you are placing your reliance in assistants like Crabbe and Goyle —"

"They're not the only ones, I've got other people on my side, better people!"

"Then why not confide in me, and I can —"

"I know what you're up to! You want to steal my glory!"

There was another pause, then Snape said coldly, "You are speaking like a child. I quite understand that your fathers capture and imprisonment has upset you, but —"

We suddenly heard Draco's footsteps and Harry and I had barely flung aside when the door opened and Draco strode down the corridor, past Slughorn's office, and out of sight.

Snape left the room and returned to the party. Harry and I looked at each other with the same expression on our faces.

Fear.

~ ~ ~

It was Christmas break and we were at the Burrow. I sat in my room that I shared with Ginny.

What was Draco's plan? What did he need to do? Why did Snape want to help?

All these thoughts were running through my mind, and I suddenly felt someone grab and lift me over their shoulder.

"Bill..." I said warningly.

"Yes love?" he said cheekily.

"What are you doing?"

"We're going outside."

"I don't want to!"

"You've been cooped up in here all day. We're going out."

Harry and Ron, who were in the kitchen cutting sprouts for Mrs. Weasley, looked up at us as Bill carried me into the kitchen,

"Why are you kidnapping Fawn?" asked Ron.

"Shut up," replied Bill as we went outside and into the garden.

Bill set me down onto the snow and put his arms around me. "Now tell me, is it Draco again?"

I burst into tears. With being a Professor at Hogwarts, I had to keep myself strict and not show much emotion such as crying. And now, everything just poured out.

"I don't know what'll happen to Draco!" I wailed, throwing my arms around Bill. "And I think Snape's trying to help him! Or maybe he's pretending. I don't know! And Draco, if he doesn't do this plan, Voldemort will k-kill him and his family and-"

I broke off sobbing and Bill stroked my hair. "Shhhh Fawn, I know you're scared."

There was nothing else for Bill to say, but I was thankful for the silence, where I just nuzzled my face into the crook of his neck, and we sat in the snow.

"Blargh, you two are disgusting."

We looked up to see Fred and George walking towards us.

"Shut up." mumbled Bill.

"Fawn?" asked George, noticing my red eyes and looking at me with concern. "Why were you crying?"

"Are you alright?" asked Fred gently.

"Nothing, I'm fine." I said, wiping my eyes,

Fred and George thankfully didn't press the issue.

"Where are you two going?" I asked, changing the topic.

"We're going to the village." said Fred.

"There's a very pretty girl working in the paper shop you thinks my card tricks are fantastic. Almost like.... magic." said George.

"Do you want to come?" asked Fred.

"Sure."

Bill and I followed Fred and George to the village. I never went to the village before, and it wasn't too far. It was only about a twenty minute walk. Walking through the muggle village, we followed the twins into a paper shop. George went straight to a young and beautiful girl, who was working behind the counter. The girl smiled when she saw George and they started talking.

"How cute," I said smiling.

I slipped my hand into Bill's and we browsed the shop. After some time, I suddenly heard the girl yelling at George. He quickly ran out of the shop and Fred, Bill and I followed.

"What happened?" I asked.

"It turned out she has a bloody boyfriend!" George said irritably.

"How'd you find out?" asked Fred.

"I asked her on a date, and she started yelling and saying she has a boyfriend. How was I supposed to know!"

Bill, Fred and I burst out laughing while George grumbled something about girls always sending mixed signals as we walked back to the burrow.

~39~ Christmas Eve Gathering

On Christmas Eve, we were all sitting in the living room, which Ginny had decorated so lavishly that it was rather like sitting in a paper-chain explosion.

We were listening to a Christmas broadcast by Mrs. Weasleys favorite singer, Celestina Warbeck, whose voice was warbling out of the large wooden wireless set.

Bill and I were cuddling on the couch. Remus and Sirius were sitting quietly. Fred, George, Damon, Lucas, and Finley had started a game of Exploding Snap with Ginny. Ron kept shooting Bill and I covert looks, as though hoping to pick up tips.

"Stop looking at us." I said to Ron, nudging him with my foot.

"I'm not...." he said, turning slightly red.

"What, do you want to figure out how to properly kiss Lavender?"

"Shut up!"

"I bet you do, you have a very bad kissing technique." I said. "It always looks like you're inhaling her face whole- AGHHHH."

Ron had grabbed me and wrestled me to the ground, and he had me pinned there and was tickling me.

"RON STOP IT I SWEAR TO MERLIN I WILL GIVE YOU DETENTION WHEN WE GO BACK TO HOGWARTS!"

Everyone stopped what they were doing to look at us as Ron tickled me and I laughed hysterically.

"BILL DO SOMETHING!" I cried.

"You're on your own on this one Fawn." Bill said.

Ron finally got off of me.

"Thanks for your help *William."* I said with a small *"hmph,"* I got up and went to sit next to Harry instead.

Remus, who was thinner and more ragged looking than ever, was sitting beside the fire, staring into its depths as though he could not hear Celestina's voice.

Oh, come and stir my cauldron,
And if you do it right,
I'll boil you up some hot strong love
To keep you warm tonight.

"We danced to this when we were eighteen!" said Mrs. Weasley, wiping her eyes on her knitting. "Do you remember, Arthur?"

"Mphf?" said Mr. Weasley, whose head had been nodding over the satsuma he was peeling. "Oh yes...marvelous tune..."

With an effort, he sat up a little straighter and looked around at Harry and me, where we were sitting next to him.

"Sorry about this," he said, jerking his head toward the wireless as Celestina broke into the chorus. "Be over soon."

"No problem," said Harry, grinning. "Has it been busy at the Ministry?"

"Very," said Mr. Weasley. "I wouldn't mind if we were getting anywhere, but of the three arrests we've made in the last couple of months, I doubt that one of them is a genuine Death Eater — only don't repeat that, Harry," he added quickly, looking much more awake all of a sudden.

"They're not still holding Stan Shunpike, are they?" I asked.

"I'm afraid so," said Mr. Weasley. "I know Dumbledore's tried appealing directly to Scrimgeour about Stan...I mean, anybody who has actually interviewed him agrees that he's about as much a Death Eater as this satsuma...but the top levels want to look as though they're making some progress, and 'three arrests' sounds

better than 'three mistaken arrests and releases'...but again, this is all top secret..."

"I won't say anything," I said.

"Me too," said Harry.

We stayed silent for a bit. Harry started talking to Mr. Weasley and I spaced out, not listing anymore. After a bit, I decided to back to Bill. When I sat next to him he scooped me onto his lap.

"Ah so you're not angry at me anymore?" he asked.

"I still am."

Bill chuckled. "You're so stubborn."

"I know."

After some time, everyone decided to go to bed. With Remus, Sirius, Lucas, Damon and Finley also staying for Christmas, I couldn't sleep in the same room as Bill since he was bunking with the twins and Damon.

We decided to stay on the couch. Bill laid down and wrapped me in his arms.

"It sucks you have to work at Hogwarts, I really miss you during the year." he said.

"Me too." I said.

"How come Hermione's not here this year? And who's this Lavender girl you mentioned?"

I snorted. "Ron started dating Lavender, a girl in his year, and now Hermione and him aren't talking because of it."

"Idiot." Bill muttered. "Ron is an idiot."

"I full-heartedly agree."

We stayed silent for a moment.

"I can't believe we only have about seven months left before we get married." he said suddenly.

I grinned. "It feels so far away, yet so soon."

"Ahem, mind if I join on this cuddle party?" someone said.

We looked over to see Sirius.

"Why don't you go get Remus then" I said with a grin.

Sirius flopped down on the sofa across from us. "How dare you."

Sirius fell asleep almost right away and I tried not to laugh.

"Did Sirius really just come here and fall asleep?" Bill whispered.

I nodded with a chuckle. "Sirius is really something else isn't he."

And Bill and I fell asleep too.

~40~ Percy

The next morning, I woke up to Sirius literally dragging me off of Bill.

"What the fuck-?"

"IT'S CHRISTMAS!" yelled Sirius.

"AND YOU'RE THIRTY-SIX! STOP ACTING LIKE A CHILD!" I yelled back.

That didn't stop Sirius from throwing me a gift. Straight at my face.

Bill woke up. "Wassgoingon?"

"Sirius is a five year old." I replied, tearing open my gift to reveal a drawing of me.

"You drew this?" I asked Sirius.

He nodded. "I've always liked drawing, it's not very good though."

I looked at the drawing. "What are you talking about? It's amazing!"

Sirius grinned, and his grin grew wider when he opened my gift, which was a black leather jacket, matching one that I had.

"Now we can be matching!" I said excitedly.

"And you call *me* the five year old?" he joked.

At lunch, everyone was wearing sweaters from Mrs. Weasley, except for Mrs. Weasley herself. She was wearing a brand-new midnight blue witch's hat glittering with what looked like tiny star-like diamonds, and a spectacular golden necklace.

"Fred and George gave them to me! Aren't they beautiful?"

"Well, we find we appreciate you more and more, Mum, now that we're washing our own socks," said George, waving an airy hand. "Parsnips, Remus?"

"I invited Tonks over, but she wouldn't come. Have you spoken to her lately, Remus?" Mrs. Weasley asked Remus.

"No, I haven't been in contact with anybody very much," said Remus. "But Tonks has got her own family to go to, hasn't she?"

I had a sense it had something to do with the fact that, even though Remus and Tonks loved each other, he was avoiding her.

"Hmmm," said Mrs. Weasley, giving Remus an annoyed look. "Maybe. I got the impression she was planning to spend Christmas alone, actually."

Bill had just passed me the bowl of mashed potatoes when Mrs. Weasley suddenly cried out "Arthur! Arthur — it's Percy!"

"What?"

Mr. Weasley looked around. Everybody looked quickly at the window; Ginny stood up for a better look. There, sure enough, was Percy Weasley, striding across the snowy yard, his horn-rimmed glasses glinting in the sunlight. He was not, however, alone.

"Arthur, he's — he's with the Minister!"

And sure enough, the Minister was following along in Percy's wake, limping slightly, his mane of graying hair and his black cloak flecked with snow.

Bill and I glanced at each other.

The backdoor opened and there stood Percy. After a long and painful silence, Percy said stiffly "Merry Christmas Mother."

"Oh Percy!" said Mrs. Weasley, throwing her arms around Percy's neck.

Rufus Scrimgeour paused in the doorway, leaning on his walking

stick and smiling as he observed this affecting scene.

"You must forgive this intrusion," he said, when Mrs. Weasley looked around at him, beaming and wiping her eyes. "Percy and I were in the vicinity — working, you know — and he couldn't resist dropping in and seeing you all."

But Percy showed no sign of wanting to greet any of the rest of the family. He stood, poker-straight and awkward-looking, and stared over everybody else's heads. Mr. Weasley, Fred, and George were all observing him, stony-faced.

"Please, come in, sit down, Minister!" fluttered Mrs. Weasley, straightening her hat. "Have a little purkey, or some tooding...I mean —"

"No, no, my dear Molly," said Scrimgeour. I guessed that he had checked her name with Percy before they entered the house. "I don't want to intrude, wouldn't be here at all if Percy hadn't wanted to see you all so badly..."

"Oh, Perce!" said Mrs. Weasley tearfully, reaching up to kiss him.

"...We've only looked in for five minutes, so I'll have a stroll around the yard while you catch up with Percy. No, no, I assure you I don't want to butt in! Well, if anybody cared to show me your charming garden...Ah, that young man's finished, why doesn't he take a stroll with me?"

The atmosphere around the table changed perceptibly. Everybody looked from Scrimgeour to Harry. Nobody seemed to find Scrimgeour's pretense that he did not know Harry's name convincing, or find it natural that he should be chosen to accompany the Minister around the garden when me, Ginny, and George also had clean plates.

"Yeah, all right," said Harry into the silence.

"It's fine," he said quietly, as he passed Remus, who had half risen from his chair. "Fine," he added, as Mr. Weasley opened his mouth to speak.

Sirius stood up but Harry pushed him back down. "It's fine."

"I can come too-" I began.

"It's fine." Harry insisted.

"Wonderful!" said Scrimgeour, standing back to let Harry pass through the door ahead of him. "We'll just take a turn around the garden, and Percy and I'll be off. Carry on, everyone!"

The door closed behind them and we all looked at Percy awkwardly.

"Come sit down dear," said Mrs. Weasley, piling food into a plate.

Percy glanced at Bill and I. "Wedding still on then?"

I nodded while Bill glared at Percy. I started to feel a little worried for Harry, having no idea what the Minister wanted from him. Percy started to eat, probably just so that Mrs. Weasley doesn't continue bugging him to eat food. After a very long silence, Fred, George and Ginny were starting to get annoyed with Percy.

"So why are you really here?" asked George.

"I wanted to see all of you," Percy said, tonelessly.

"You don't need to lie." said Fred.

"I'm not." said Percy.

Ginny scoffed. And then suddenly, Fred, George and Ginny started throwing mashed potatoes as Percy. "What the-" With his glasses smeared with potatoes, he got up and stormed out of the house.

Harry walked in and looked surprised at the scene. "What happened?"

With Percy now gone, Mrs. Weasley started crying and yelling at Ginny and the twins. "EVERYONE TO THEIR ROOMS NOW!"

There was no need to be told twice. Even Mr. Weasley, Remus,

Sirius, Damon, Lucas, Finley, Bill and I knew we should run to our rooms too.

"Fuck Percy," I said, as we went into Fred and George's bedroom.

"I can't believe it, he came just so that the Minister can talk to Harry." Bill said angrily.

Later that night, I was sitting out in the snow, just spacing out when Bill sat next to me.

"You alright love?" he asked, placing his arm around me.

"Could be better." I replied.

Bill put his head on top of mine and we sat in silence. It was the little moments like these that really make me happy. I pulled my head from under Bill's and he looked upset, until I kissed his lips gently.

Bill smiled against my lips and pulled my closer. After pulling away, I placed my hands on his cheeks.

"I love you so much Bill," I whispered.

"And I love you Fawn," he whispered back.

~ ~ ~

Late in the afternoon, a few days after New Year, Harry, Ron, Ginny and I lined up beside the kitchen fire to return to Hogwarts. The Ministry had arranged this one-off connection to the Floo Network to return students quickly and safely to the school. Only Mrs. Weasley was there to say good-bye, as Mr. Weasley, Fred, George and Bill were all at work. Mrs. Weasley dissolved into tears at the moment of parting.

"Don't cry, Mum," said Ginny, patting her on the back as Mrs. Weasley sobbed into her shoulder. "It's okay..."

"Yeah, don't worry about us," said Ron, permitting his mother to plant a very wet kiss on his cheek, "or about Percy. He's such a prat, it's not really a loss, is it?"

"Don't worry Mrs. Weasley, we'll be seeing you soon," I said, giving her a big hug.

Mrs. Weasley sobbed harder than ever as she enfolded Harry in her arms.

"Promise me you'll look after yourself...Stay out of trouble..."

"I always do, Mrs. Weasley," said Harry. "I like a quiet life, you know me."

She gave a watery chuckle and stood back. "Be good, then, all of you..."

I stepped into the fireplace and shouted "Hogwarts!" I had one last fleeting view of the Weasleys' kitchen and Mrs. Weasley's tearful face before the flames engulfed me; spinning very fast, I caught blurred glimpses of other Wizarding rooms, which were whipped out of sight before I could get a proper look; then I was slowing down, finally stopping squarely in the fireplace in Minnie's office.

"Evening Minnie," I said, stepping out of the fireplace.

She looked up. "Evening Fawn, did you have a fun Christmas break?"

"Yes I did."

She peered at me. "Not *too* much fun I hope...."

I laughed just as Ron came into view.

"Don't worry Minnie, Bill and I aren't having *that* kind of fun just yet."

Ron groaned. "Ugh, I came in a bad time didn't I."

I smiled and went to my office.

~41~ Poison

The next few months passed without anything too drastic thankfully. Until Ron's birthday. I was in the library around ten pm, when Minnie came rushing to me and told me that Ron was poisoned and was currently in the Hospital Wing.

"Poisoned?!" I screeched, before bolting to the Hospital Wing.

I burst in through the double doors to find Bill, Ginny, Harry and Hermione sitting around Ron's bed.

"How long has he been here for?" I asked breathlessly.

"All day," said Ginny gloomily.

"All day? How come I only heard this now?!"

"You were teaching and marking homework the whole day."

I sank into a chair next to Bill, when the doors opened again and Fred and George arrived. They looked at Ron.

"So, all in all, not one of Ron's better birthdays?" said Fred.

"This isn't how we imagined handing over our present," said George grimly, putting down a large wrapped gift on Ron's bedside cabinet and sitting beside Ginny.

"Yeah, when we pictured the scene, he was conscious," said Fred.

"There we were in Hogsmeade, waiting to surprise him —" said George.

"You were in Hogsmeade?" asked Ginny, looking up.

"We were thinking of buying Zonko's," said Fred gloomily. "A Hogsmeade branch, you know, but a fat lot of good it'll do us if you lot aren't allowed out at weekends to buy our stuff anymore...But

never mind that now."

He drew up a chair beside Harry and looked at Ron's pale face.

"How exactly did it happen, Harry?"

And Harry explained how Ron had accidentally taken a love potion, then he took Ron to see Slughorn, and after Slughorn made an antidote, he gave them some mead.

"...and then I got the bezoar down his throat and his breathing eased up a bit, Slughorn ran for help, McGonagall and Madam Pomfrey turned up, and they brought Ron up here. They reckon he'll be all right. Madam Pomfrey says he'll have to stay here a week or so...keep taking essence of rue..."

"Blimey, it was lucky you thought of a bezoar," said George in a low voice.

"Lucky there was one in the room," said Harry.

"Do Mum and Dad know?" Fred asked Ginny and Bill

"They've already seen him, they arrived an hour ago — they're in Dumbledore's office now, but they'll be back soon..." answered Ginny.

There was a pause while we all watched Ron mumble a little in his sleep. I sniffed and Bill took my hand.

"So the poison was in the drink?" said Fred quietly.

"Yes," said Harry at once "Slughorn poured it out —"

"Would he have been able to slip something into Ron's glass without you seeing?"

"Probably," said Harry, "but why would Slughorn want to poison Ron?"

"No idea," said Fred, frowning. "You don't think he could have mixed up the glasses by mistake? Meaning to get you?"

"Why would Slughorn want to poison Harry?" asked Ginny.

"I dunno," said Fred, "but there must be loads of people who'd like to poison Harry, mustn't there? 'The Chosen One' and all that?"

"So you think Slughorn's a Death Eater?" said Ginny.

"Anything's possible," said George darkly.

"He could be under the Imperius Curse," said Bill.

"Or he could be innocent," said Ginny. "The poison could have been in the bottle, in which case it was probably meant for Slughorn himself."

"Who'd want to kill Slughorn?" I asked.

"Dumbledore reckons Voldemort wanted Slughorn on his side," said Harry. "Slughorn was in hiding for a year before he came to Hogwarts. And...and maybe Voldemort wants him out of the way, maybe he thinks he could be valuable to Dumbledore."

"But you said Slughorn had been planning to give that bottle to Dumbledore for Christmas, "Ginny reminded him. "So the poisoner could just as easily have been after Dumbledore."

"Then the poisoner didn't know Slughorn very well," said Hermione, speaking for the first time and sounding as though she had a bad head cold. "Anyone who knew Slughorn would have known there was a good chance he'd keep something that tasty for himself."

"Er-my-nee," croaked Ron unexpectedly from between us.

We all fell silent, watching him anxiously, but after muttering incomprehensibly for a moment, he merely started snoring.

The dormitory doors flew open, making us all jump: Hagrid came striding toward them, his hair rain-flecked, his bearskin coat flapping behind him, a crossbow in his hand, leaving a trail of muddy dolphin-sized footprints all over the floor.

"Bin in the forest all day!" he panted. "Aragog's worse, I bin readin'

to him — didn' get up ter dinner till jus' now an' then Professor Sprout told me abou' Ron! How is he?"

"Not bad," said Harry. "They say he'll be okay."

"No more than seven visitors at a time!" said Poppy, hurrying out of her office.

"Hagrid makes seven." George pointed out.

"Oh...yes..." said Poppy, who seemed to have been counting Hagrid as several people due to his vastness. To cover her confusion, she hurried off to clear up his muddy foot prints with her wand.

"I don' believe this," said Hagrid hoarsely, shaking his great shaggy head as he stared down at Ron. "Jus' don' believe it...Look at him lyin' there...Who'd want ter hurt him, eh?"

"That's just what we were discussing," said Harry. "We don't know."

"Someone couldn' have a grudge against the Gryffindor Quidditch team, could they?" said Hagrid anxiously. "Firs' Katie, now Ron..."

"I can't see anyone trying to bump off a Quidditch team," said George.

"Wood might've done the Slytherins if he could've got away with it," said Fred fairly.

"Well, I don't think it's Quidditch, but I think there's a connection between the attacks," said Hermione quietly

"How d'you work that out?" I asked.

"Well, for one thing, they both ought to have been fatal and weren't, although that was pure luck. And for another, neither the poison nor the necklace seems to have reached the person who was supposed to be killed. Of course," she added broodingly, "that makes the person behind this even more dangerous in a way, because they don't seem to care how many people they finish off before they actually reach their victim."

Before we could say anything, the dormitory doors opened again and Mr. and Mrs. Weasley hurried up the ward. They had done no more than satisfy themselves that Ron would make a full recovery on their last visit to the ward; now Mrs. Weasley seized hold of Harry and hugged him very tightly.

"Dumbledore's told us how you saved him with the bezoar," she sobbed. "Oh, Harry, what can we say? You saved Ginny...you saved Arthur...now you've saved Ron

"Don't be...I didn't..." muttered Harry awkwardly.

"Half our family does seem to owe you their lives, now I stop and think about it," Mr. Weasley said in a constricted voice. "Well, all I can say is that it was a lucky day for the Weasleys when Ron decided to sit in your compartment on the Hogwarts Express Harry."

Poppy rushed in and reminded us that there could only be six visitors. Harry, Hermione, Hagrid and I left, deciding to leave Ron with his family. Bill followed too. I walked with him to my bedroom.

"I can't believe it," I said sadly.

"I know, he'll be alright though." said Bill, squeezing my hand.

We arrived to my bed chambers and I closed the door, flopping onto my bed. Bill hesitated before kicking off his shoes and laying down next to me.

"What a fantastic birthday for Ron." I said sarcastically.

"He'll be fine Fawn, Madam Pomfrey said so, and you know what a fantastic healer she is."

I laid on my back and stared at the ceiling. I kept my eyes glued to the small chandelier that was above my bed, but my view was blocked when Bill moved on top of me, hovering above me with his elbows on either side of me.

"Good evening." I said, my heart racing.

He smirked. "Good evening? Is that all you can think of darling?"

I cleared my throat. "Yes."

Bill chuckled and leaned down, pressing his lips lightly on mine. I placed my hands on cheeks. His lips trailed down, placing soft kisses along my jaw. He started moving his lips to my neck, kissing me softly.

"Bill..." I mumbled.

Bill didn't answer, and instead he started leaving love bites along my neck and collarbone before kissing my lips again.

~ ~ ~

The next morning I was feeling giddy from my night with Bill. He had left in the early morning to go to work while I went to breakfast.

"Good morning." said Minnie. "You look awfully happy today."

"I am." I said, pouring syrup on my pancakes.

Minnie raised an eyebrow but said nothing more. I noticed a lot of students were staring at me strangely, and I didn't know why until Ginny cornered me after class.

"Why d'you have hickeys?" she asked.

My head snapped up. "What?"

She took her handheld mirror out of her bag and handed it to me. Sure enough, there were small bruises along my neck and collarbone. I turned a bright red.

"Oh Merlin, I didn't notice." I said. *"Damn Bill."*

Ginny giggled. "Aw, did ickl Fawney and Bill have se-"

"No we didn't!" I said loudly. "We just.... kissed."

She smirked. "Sure..."

"Okok, but we didn't go there just yet for your information." I snapped.

I was feeling very awkward for the rest of the day. I managed to hide my hickey's but that didn't change anything for those who had already seen it. Draco, even though he was looking even more pale and ill, thought the whole thing was hilarious.

Over the next few weeks, a few things happened. Ron left the Hospital Wing, Ron and Hermione became friends again, Ron and Lavender broke up, Ginny and Dean broke up, and Katie finally came back from St. Mungo's.

A few days before the match against Gryffindor and Ravenclaw, I was walking to by bedroom chambers after dinner when I saw Snape holding Draco, who was bloody. I rushed over.

"What on earth happened to Draco?" I asked shrilly.

"Take Malfoy to the Hospital Wing, I need to go speak with Potter." said Snape. "Tell Madam Pomfrey to give him dittany."

I gingerly took Draco in my arms and helped him to the Hospital Wing and told Poppy what Snape told me. After a while, Poppy let me go inside to see Draco.

"What happened?" I asked, sitting next to Draco's bed.

"Potter used some curse on me." he said. "I don't know it, I've never heard it before."

I gasped. "What? Why would he do that?"

It wasn't like Harry to randomly attack people using dangerous curses, even on people he hates.

"He um, he saw me in the bathroom. I was talking to Moaning Myrtle, and I may or may not have pulled out my wand right away...."

"Draco!"

"I know, I know. I panicked. I didn't know how much Potter heard...."

I sighed. "Draco, look, this curse that Harry used, it's wrong. But you shouldn't have tried to curse him either."

Draco nodded. "I'm sorry Aunt Fawn."

I hugged him. "Get some sleep, you'll need it."

~ ~ ~

After the match between Gryffindor and Ravenclaw (which Harry couldn't attend because he had detention with Snape) Harry and Ginny started going out. The O.W.L'S and N.E.W.T.S were coming up and classes were starting to become super stressful. Then on June 30'th, Dumbledore called me to his office.

I went to see all the Professor's, along with Bill, Remus, Sirius, and Tonks were there.

"I will be leaving the school tonight for a few hours, and I need each of you to be on the lookout and patrol the castle." he said.

~42~ Death Eaters In The Castle

And so, that night, we patrolled the castle. It was very quiet. I knew that all the secret passageways were covered. I kept my wand out the entire time. Everything was fine for a few hours, until I heard voices and footsteps running. I was patrolling with Remus.

"What-?"

Ron, Ginny and Neville ran into us, looking frightened.

"What are you doing?" I yelled. "It's past past curfew!"

They panted and gasped.

"Death Eaters!" choked out Ginny.

"Malfoy with them." said Ron, bending over to catch his breath.

"They're in the castle!" screeched Neville.

"Death Eaters?!" Remus asked.

"They came in from the Room of Requirement." explained Ron. "Malfoy was leading them!"

We ran through the castle, and found the Death Eaters running towards the Astronomy Tower. The Death Eater's ran when they saw us, but we hurried after them.

"STUPEFY!" I yelled, but my jinx missed, hitting a wall instead.

Bill, Tonks, Sirius, Minnie and Filius came running.

"Filius go fetch Severus!" Minnie shouted.

Filius rushed off while the others joined the fight. A Death Eater,

Gibbon, broke away and ran up the Tower stairs. After a couple minutes, Gibbon came running down, and was hit by a Killing Curse that had just missed Remus.

Alecto Carrow stepped in front of me. "Well, hello there pretty." she cackled.

She shot a Killing Curse at me but I blocked it. I managed to knock Alecto down and I turned to see Bill laying on the floor, with a pool of blood around him and Greyback was standing above him.

"BILL!" I screamed

I shot a curse at Greyback and he was knocked aside. I saw Draco running in the distance.

"DRACO!" I yelled.

Draco looked back at me and gave me a sad look, before turning away, stepping over Bill, and running up the stairs.

I turned to Bill and knelt down beside him. I felt for a pulse. He wasn't dead. But he was so badly slashed and ripped, his face was unrecognizable.

A large, blonde Death Eater was firing of curses everywhere. Amycus and Alecto Carrow and Greyback rushed up the stairs. Amycus turned and waved his wand towards the end of the stairs.

Neville ran at it, but was thrown backward. I ran at it too, but I was also thrown backwards. I landed heavily on my back and groaned. I got up and saw Snape running towards us, then he ran up the stairs. Remus tried to follow, but he was thrown back just like Neville and I.

He's going to stop the Death Eaters. He has to be. He's going to save Draco from the Death Eaters.

Tonks was fighting the large blonde Death Eater, while Remus got up and fought another one. I pulled myself off the ground just as Draco and Snape running passed. We all saw them run, and we let them go.

Snape's getting Draco to safety. They must be being chased by the Death Eaters.

I heard Snape yell something, but I couldn't hear what he said.

Greyback, Alecto and Amycus were running back down, and I saw Harry running down too.

"Harry!" I yelled.

Greyback jumped on top of Harry and I raised my wand and yelled "Petrificus Totalus!" and Greback collapsed. Harry pushed Greyback off and continued running.

I turned back to the Death Eater I was fighting. Then the Death Eaters, one by one, started running away.

I rushed back to Bill. "SOMEONE HELPE ME GET BILL TO THE HOSPITAL WING!"

Remus and Sirius rushed forward.

"You go help the others." said Sirius, as he and Remus lifted Bill up.

I went to help Neville and I took him to the Hospital Wing. When I helped Neville into a bed, I went to Bill's bed. Tonks, Ron, Luna and Hermione came in.

"Where's Ginny?" I asked.

"McGonagall told her to get Harry." said Luna.

Poppy started dabbing Bill with a harsh-smelling green ointment. The door's opened and Harry and Ginny walked in. Hermione rushed forwards to hug Harry. Remus walked forward too.

"Are you all right, Harry?" he asked.

"I'm fine.....how's Bill?"

None of us answered.

"Can't you fix them with a charm or something?" Harry asked

Poppy.

"No charm will work on these," said Poppy. "I've tried everything I know, but there is no cure for werewolf bites."

I took the ointment from Poppy and started dabbing it on his wounds myself.

"But he wasn't bitten at the full moon," said Ron, who was gazing down into his brother's face as though he could somehow force him to mend just by staring. "Greyback hadn't transformed, so surely Bill won't be a — a real —?"

He looked at Remus.

"No, I don't think that Bill will be a true werewolf," said Remus, "but that does not mean that there won't be some contamination. Those are cursed wounds. They are unlikely ever to heal fully, and — and Bill might have some wolfish characteristics from now on."

"Dumbledore might know something that'd work, though," Ron said. "Where is he? Bill fought those maniacs on Dumbledore's orders, Dumbledore owes him, he can't leave him in this state."

"Ron — Dumbledore's dead," said Ginny.

~43~ Dumbledore's Death

"No!" Remus looked wildly from Ginny to Harry, as though hoping the latter might contradict her, but when Harry did not, Remus collapsed into a chair beside Bill's bed, his hands over his face.

Sirius looked shocked, and his hands started shaking.

"Dead?" I whispered, tears spilling from my eyes.

"How did he die?" whispered Tonks. "How did it happen?"

"Snape killed him," said Harry. "I was there, I saw it. We arrived back on the Astronomy Tower because that's where the Mark was...Dumbledore was ill, he was weak, but I think he realized it was a trap when we heard footsteps running up the stairs. He immobilized me, I couldn't do anything, I was under the Invisibility Cloak — and then Malfoy came through the door and disarmed him —"

Hermione clapped her hands to her mouth and Ron groaned. Luna's mouth trembled.

"— more Death Eaters arrived — and then Snape — and Snape did it. The Avada Kedavra."Harry couldn't go on.

Poppy burst into tears. Ginny shushed her. "Shhh listen!"

Poppy pressed her fingers to her mouth, her eyes wide. Somewhere out in the darkness, a phoenix was singing in a way I had never heard before: a stricken lament of terrible beauty. And I felt, as I had felt about phoenix song before, that the music was inside me, not without: It was my own grief turned magically to song that echoed across the grounds and through the castle windows.

Minnie entered the ward. Like all the rest, she bore marks of the recent battle: There were grazes on her face and her robes were ripped.

"Molly and Arthur are on their way," she said, and the spell of the music was broken: Everyone roused themselves as though coming out of trances, turning again to look at Bill, or else to rub their own eyes, shake their heads. "Harry, what happened? According to Hagrid you were with Professor Dumbledore when he — when it happened. He says Professor Snape was involved in some —"

"Snape killed Dumbledore," said Harry.

She stared at him for a moment, then swayed alarmingly; Poppy, who seemed to have pulled herself together, ran forward, conjuring a chair from thin air, which she pushed under Minnie.

"Snape," repeated Minnie faintly, falling into the chair. "We all wondered...but he trusted...always...Snape...I can't believe it..."

"Snape was a highly accomplished Occlumens," said Remus, his voice uncharacteristically harsh. "We always knew that."

"But Dumbledore swore he was on our side!" whispered Tonks. "I always thought Dumbledore must know something about Snape that we didn't..."

"He always hinted that he had an ironclad reason for trusting Snape," muttered Minnie, now dabbing at the corners of her leaking eyes with a tartan-edged handkerchief. "I mean...with Snape's history...of course people were bound to wonder...but Dumbledore told me explicitly that Snape's repentance was absolutely genuine — Wouldn't hear a word against him!"

"I'd love to know what Snape told him to convince him," said Sirius.

"I know," said Harry, and we all turned to look at him. "Snape passed Voldemort the information that made Voldemort hunt down my mum and dad. Then Snape told Dumbledore he hadn't realized what he was doing, he was really sorry he'd done it, sorry that they were dead."

"And Dumbledore believed that?" said Remus incredulously.

"Dumbledore believed Snape was sorry James was dead? Snape *hated* James..." continued Sirius.

"And he didn't think my mother was worth a damn either," said Harry, "because she was Muggle-born...'Mudblood,' he called her..."

My hand started shaking so bad I dropped the ointment. Tonks took it from me picked it from the floor, handed it back to Poppy, and helped me into a chair. I rubbed my hands over my face.

"This is all my fault," said Minnie suddenly. She looked disoriented, twisting her wet handkerchief in her hands. "I sent Filius to fetch Snape tonight. If I hadn't alerted Snape to what was going on, he might never have joined forces with the Death Eaters. I don't think he knew they were there before Filius told him, I don't think he knew they were coming."

"It isn't your fault, Minerva," said Remus firmly. "We all wanted more help, we were glad to think Snape was on his way..."

"So when he arrived at the fight, he joined in on the Death Eaters' side?" asked Harry.

"I don't know exactly how it happened," said Minnie distractedly. "It's all so confusing...Dumbledore had told us that he would be leaving the school for a few hours and that we were to patrol the corridors just in case...Remus, Sirius, Bill, and Nymphadora were to join us...and so we patrolled. All seemed quiet. Every secret passageway out of the school was covered. We knew nobody could fly in. There were powerful enchantments on every entrance into the castle. I still don't knowhow the Death Eaters can possibly have entered..."

"I do," said Harry, and he explained, briefly, about the pair of Vanishing Cabinets and the magical pathway they formed. "So they got in through the Room of Requirement."

"So that was Draco's mission?" I asked.

Harry nodded and I burst into tears. Sirius rubbed my back and I sobbed into my hands. Everyone stayed quiet for a few minutes.

"I messed up, Harry," said Ron bleakly. "We did like you told us: We checked the Marauder's Map and we couldn't see Malfoy on it, so

we thought he must be in the Room of Requirement, some, Ginny, and Neville went to keep watch on it...but Malfoy got past us."

"He came out of the room about an hour after we started keeping watch," said Ginny. "He was on his own, clutching that awful shriveled arm —"

"His Hand of Glory," said Ron. "Gives light only to the holder, remember?"

"Anyway," Ginny went on, "he must have been checking whether the coast was clear to let the Death Eaters out, because the moment he saw us he threw something into the air and it all went pitch-black —"

"— Peruvian Instant Darkness Powder," said Ron bitterly. "Fred and George's. I'm going to behaving a word with them about who they let buy their products."

"We tried everything, Lumos, Incendio," said Ginny. "Nothing would penetrate the darkness; all we could do was grope our way out of the corridor again, and meanwhile we could hear people rushing past us. Obviously Malfoy could see because of that hand thing and was guiding them, but we didn't dare use any curses or anything in case we hit each other, and by the time we'd reached a corridor that was light, they'd gone."

"Luckily," said Remus hoarsely, "Ron, Ginny, and Neville ran into Fawn and I almost immediately and told us what had happened. We found the Death Eaters minutes later, heading in the direction of the Astronomy Tower. Malfoy obviously hadn't expected more people to be on the watch; he seemed to have exhausted his supply of Darkness Powder, at any rate. A fight broke out, they scattered and we gave chase. One of them, Gibbon, broke away and headed up the tower stairs -"

"To set off the Mark?" asked Harry.

"He must have done, yes, they must have arranged that before they left the Room of Requirement," said Remus. "But I don't think Gibbon liked the idea of waiting up there alone for Dumbledore,

because he came running back downstairs to rejoin the fight and was hit by a Killing Curse that just missed me."

"So if Ron was watching the Room of Requirement with Ginny and Neville," said Harry, turning to Hermione, "were you —?"

"Outside Snape's office, yes," whispered Hermione, her eyes sparkling with tears, "with Luna. We hung around for ages outside it and nothing happened...We didn't know what was going on upstairs, Ron had taken the map — It was nearly midnight when Professor Flitwick came sprinting down into the dungeons. He was shouting about Death Eaters in the castle, I don't think he really registered that Luna and I were there at all, he just burst his way into Snape's office and we heard him saying that Snape had to go back with him and help and then we heard a loud thump and Snape came hurtling out of his room and he saw us and — and —"

"What?" Harry urged her.

"I was so stupid, Harry!" said Hermione in a high-pitched whisper. "He said Professor Flitwick had collapsed and that we should go and take care of him while he — while he went to help fight the Death Eaters —" She covered her face in shame and continued to talk into her fingers, so that her voice was muffled. "We went into his office to see if we could help Professor Flitwick and found him unconscious on the floor...and oh, it's so obvious now, Snape must have Stupefied Flitwick, but we didn't realize, Harry, we didn't realize, we just let Snape go!"

"It's not your fault," said Sirius firmly. "Hermione, had you not obeyed Snape and got out of the way, he probably would have killed you and Luna."

"So then he came upstairs," said Harry. "and he found the place where you were all fighting..."

"We were in trouble, we were losing," said Tonks in a low voice. "Gibbon was down, but the rest of the Death Eaters seemed ready to fight to the death. Neville had been hurt, Bill had been savaged by Greyback...It was all dark...curses flying everywhere...The Malfoy boy had vanished, he must have slipped past, up the stairs...then

more of them ran after him, but one of them blocked the stair behind them with some kind of curse...Neville and Fawn ran at it and got thrown up into the air —"

"None of us could break through," said Ron, "and that massive Death Eater was still firing off jinxes all over the place, they were bouncing off the walls and barely missing us..."

"And then Snape was there.... and then he wasn't." said Sirius.

"I saw him running toward us, but that huge Death Eaters jinx just missed me right afterward and I ducked and lost track of things," said Ginny.

"I saw him run straight through the cursed barrier as though it wasn't there," said Remus "I tried to follow him, but was thrown back just like Neville and Fawn..."

"He must have known a spell we didn't," whispered Minnie. "After all — he was the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher...I just assumed that he was in a hurry to chase after the Death Eaters who'd escaped up to the tower..."

"He was," said Harry savagely, "but to help them, not to stop them...and I'll bet you had to have a Dark Mark to get through that barrier — so what happened when he came back down?"

"Well, the big Death Eater had just fired off a hex that caused half the ceiling to fall in, and also broke the curse blocking the stairs," said Sirius. "We all ran forward — those of us who were still standing anyway — and then Snape and the boy emerged out of the dust — obviously, none of us attacked them —"

"We just let them pass," said Tonks in a hollow voice. "We thought they were being chased by the Death Eaters — and next thing, the other Death Eaters and Greyback were back and we were fighting again — I thought I heard Snape shout something, but I don't know what —"

"He shouted, 'It's over,'" said Harry. "He'd done what he'd meant to do.

~44~ Some Small Love All Around

The doors of the hospital wing burst open, making us all jump: Mr. and Mrs. Weasley were striding up the ward.

"Molly — Arthur —" said Minnie, jumping up and hurrying to greet them. "I am so sorry —"

"Bill," whispered Mrs. Weasley, darting past Minnie as she caught sight of Bill's mangled face. "Oh, Bill!"

Remus and Tonks had got up hastily and retreated so that Mr. and Mrs. Weasley could get nearer to the bed. Mrs. Weasley bent over her son and pressed her lips to his bloody forehead.

"You said Greyback attacked him?" Mr. Weasley asked Minnie distractedly. "But he hadn't transformed? So what does that mean? What will happen to Bill?"

"We don't know," said Minnie, looking helplessly at Remus.

"There will probably be some contamination, Arthur," said Remus. "It is an odd case, possibly unique...we don't know what his behavior might be like when he awakens..."

Mrs. Weasley took the nasty-smelling ointment from Poppy and began dabbing at Bill's wounds.

"And Dumbledore..." said Mr. Weasley. "Minerva, is it true...Is he really...?"

Minnie nodded.

"Dumbledore gone," whispered Mr. Weasley, but Mrs. Weasley had eyes only for her eldest son; she began to sob, tears falling onto Bill's mutilated face.

"Of course, it doesn't matter how he looks...It's not r-really important...but he was a very handsome little b-boy...always very handsome...and he was g-going to be married!"

"What do you mean?" I asked, sitting up straight. "What do you mean he was *going* to get married?"

Mrs. Weasley raised her tear-stained face, looking startled. "Well — only that —"

"I don't think this should change his love for me." I snapped.

"No, that's not what I —"

I narrowed my eyes. "He will still love me when he wakes up. These scars will show that he's brave!" I snatched the ointment and pushed Mrs. Weasley aside. "I'll be doing *that."*

Everyone stayed silent. Mrs. Weasley and I had never gotten into an argument before. I started dabbing Bill's wounds.

"Our Great-Auntie Muriel," said Mrs. Weasley after a long pause, "has a very beautiful tiara —goblin-made — which I am sure I could persuade her to lend you for the wedding. She is very fond of Bill, you know, and it would look lovely with your hair."

"Thanks." I said. "I'm sure that would be nice."

And then we both burst into tears and hugged each other, crying on each others shoulders.

"You see!" said a strained voice. Tonks was glaring at Remus. "Fawn still wants to marry him, even though he's been bitten! She doesn't care!

"It's different," said Remus, barely moving his lips and looking suddenly tense. "Bill will not be a full werewolf. The cases are completely —"

"But I don't care either, I don't care!" said Tonks, seizing the front of Remus' robes and shaking them. "I've told you a million times..."

"And I've told you a million times," said Remus, refusing to meet her eyes. "that I am too old for you, too poor...too dangerous..."

"I've said all along you're taking a ridiculous line on this, Remus," said Mrs. Weasley over my shoulder.

"I am not being ridiculous," said Remus steadily. "Tonks deserves somebody young and whole."

"But she wants you," said Mr. Weasley, with a small smile. "And after all, Remus, young and whole men do not necessarily remain so."

He gestured sadly at Bill.

"You really are being ridiculous Rem," I said, letting go of Mrs. Weasley.

Sirius nodded in agreement. "Mate, she wants you, and I know you want her too."

"This is...not the moment to discuss it," said Remus, avoiding everybody's eyes as he looked around distractedly. "Dumbledore is dead..."

"Dumbledore would have been happier than anybody to think that there was a little more love in the world," said Minnie curtly, just as the hospital doors opened again and Hagrid walked in.

The little of his face that was not obscured by hair or beard was soaking and swollen; he was shaking with tears, a vast, spotted handkerchief in his hand.

"I've...I've done it, Professor," he choked. "M-moved him. Professor Sprout's got the kids back in bed. Professor Flitwick's lyin down, but he says he'll be all righ' in a jiffy, an' Professor Slughorn says the Ministry's bin informed."

"Thank you, Hagrid," said Minnie, standing up at once and turning to look at the group around Bill's bed. "I shall have to see the Ministry when they get here. Hagrid, please tell the Heads of Houses — Slughorn can represent Slytherin — that I want to see

them in my office forthwith. I would like you to join us too."

As Hagrid nodded, turned, and shuffled out of the room again, she looked down at Harry. "Before I meet them I would like a quick word with you, Harry. If you'll come with me.... I'd like you too come to Fawn. You may come from now."

Harry and I followed Minnie to Dumbledore's office. a new portrait had joined the ranks of the dead headmasters and headmistresses of Hogwarts: Dumbledore was slumbering in a golden frame over the desk, his halfmoon spectacle perched upon his crooked nose, looking peaceful and untroubled.

After glancing once at this portrait, Minnie made an odd movement as though steeling herself, then rounded the' desk to look at Harry, her face taut and lined.

"Harry," she said, "I would like to know what you and Professor Dumbledore were doing this evening when you left the school."

"I can't tell you that, Professor," said Harry

"Harry, it might be important," said Minnie.

"It is," said Harry, "very, but he didn't want me to tell anyone."

Minnie glared at him. "Potter, in the light of Professor Dumbledore's death, I think you must see that the situation has changed somewhat —"

"I don't think so," said Harry, shrugging. "Professor Dumbledore never told me to stop following his orders if he died."

"But —"

"There's one thing you should know before the Ministry gets here though. Madam Rosmerta's under the Imperius Curse, she was helping Malfoy and the Death Eaters, that's how the necklace and the poisoned mead —"

"Rosemerta?" I repeated, but before Harry could say anything else, there was a knock on the door behind them and Professors Sprout,

Flitwick, and Slughorn traipsed into the room, followed by Hagrid, who was still weeping copiously, his huge frame trembling with grief.

"Snape!" ejaculated Slughorn, who looked the most shaken, pale and sweating. "Snape! I taught him! I thought I knew him!"

But before any of us could respond to this, a sharp voice spoke from high on the wall: A sallow-faced wizard with a short black fringe had just walked back into his empty canvas.

"Minerva, the Minister will be here within seconds, he has just Disapparated from the Ministry."

"Thank you, Everard," said Minnie, and she turned quickly to her teachers.

"I want to talk about what happens to Hogwarts before he gets here," she said quickly. "Personally, I am not convinced that the school should reopen next year. The death of the headmaster at the hands of one of our colleagues is a terrible stain upon Hogwarts's history. It is horrible."

"I am sure Dumbledore would have wanted the school to remain open," said Pomona. "I feel that if a single pupil wants to come, then the school ought to remain open for that pupil."

"But will we have a single pupil after this?" said Slughorn, now dabbing his sweating brow with a silken handkerchief. "Parents will want to keep their children at home and I can't say I blame them. Personally, I don't think we're in more danger at Hogwarts than we are anywhere else, but you can't expect mothers to think like that. They'll want to keep their families together, it's only natural."

"I agree," said Minnie. "And in any case, it is not true to say that Dumbledore never envisaged a situation in which Hogwarts might close. When the Chamber of Secrets reopened he considered the closure of the school — and I must say that Professor Dumbledore's murder is more disturbing to me than the idea of Slytherin's monster living undetected in the bowels of the castle..."

"We must consult the governors," said Filius in his squeaky little voice; he had a large bruise on his forehead but seemed otherwise unscathed by his collapse in Snape's office. "We must follow the established procedures. A decision should not be made hastily."

"Hagrid, Fawn, you two haven't said anything," said Minnie. "What are your views, ought Hogwarts to remain open?"

Hagrid, who had been weeping silently into his large, spotted handkerchief throughout this conversation, now raised puffy red eyes and croaked, "I dunno, Professor...that's fer the Heads of House an the headmistress ter decide..."

"I agree Minnie, I don't think it's my place to say something..... I'm only just a teacher." I said.

"Professor Dumbledore always valued your views," said Minnie kindly, "and so do I."

"Well, I'm stayin," said Hagrid, fat tears still leaking out of the corners of his eyes and trickling down into his tangled beard. "It's me home, it's bin me home since I was thirteen. An' if there's kids who wan' me ter teach 'em, I'll do it. But...I dunno...Hogwarts without Dumbledore..." He gulped and disappeared behind his handkerchief once more, and there was silence.

"I want Hogwarts to stay open." I said. "But, I don't know if I'll be coming to teach next year, I'm getting married to Bill in the summer..."

Pomona gave me a small smile. "Oh how wonderful."

"Very well," said Minnie, glancing out of the window at the grounds, checking to see whether the Minister was yet approaching, "then I must agree with Filius that the right thing todo is to consult the governors, who will make the final decision. Now, as to getting students home...there is an argument for doing it sooner rather than later. We could arrange for the Hogwarts Express to come tomorrow if necessary —"

"What about Dumbledore's funeral?" said Harry.

"Well..." said Minnie, losing a little of her briskness as her voice shook. "I — I know that it was Dumbledore's wish to be laid to rest here, at Hogwarts —"

"Then that's what'll happen, isn't it?" said Harry fiercely.

"If the Ministry thinks it appropriate," said Minnie. "No other headmaster or headmistress has ever been —"

"No other headmaster or headmistress ever gave more to this school," growled Hagrid.

"Hogwarts should be Dumbledore's final resting place," said Filius.

"Absolutely," said Pomona.

"I don't care what the Ministry says." I said. "Dumbledore should be laid to rest here."

"And in that case," said Harry, "you shouldn't send the students home until the funeral's over. They'll want to say —"

Harry stopped and Pomona finished the sentence for him.

"Good-bye."

"Well said," squeaked Filius. "Well said indeed! Our students should pay tribute, it is fitting. We can arrange transport home afterward."

"Seconded," barked Pomona.

"I suppose...yes..." said Slughorn in a rather agitated voice, while Hagrid let out a strangled sob of assent.

"He's coming," said Minnie suddenly, gazing down into the grounds. "The Minister...and by the looks of it. he's brought a delegation..."

"Can I leave, Professor?" said Harry at once.

"You may," said Minnie. "And quickly."

And I watched as Harry fled from the room.

~45~ Dumbledore's Funeral

Lessons were suspended, and exams were postponed. Some students were hurried away by there parents over the next couple of days. The Patil twins were gone before breakfast on the morning after Dumbledore's death, and Zacharias Smith was escorted by his father. Seamus Finnigan, on the other hand, refused point-blank to accompany his mother home; they had a shouting match in the Entrance Hall which was resolved when she agreed that he could remain behind for the funeral.

Neville had been discharged from the Hospital Wing, but Bill had to remain under Poppy's care. Bill's scars were looking as bad as ever, he now looked a bit like Mad-Eye, although he still had both arms and legs. Thankfully, he still had the same charming personality, but now he had a great liking for very rare stakes.

When Bill had woken up, I flung myself at him.

"Easy there Fawn," he chuckled.

"I was just so worried. Are you ok?" I asked, sitting at the edge of his bed and taking his hand.

"I'm alright as long as I'm here with you." he said.

"Goodness you're so sappy," I said, though I blushed.

"Merlin, do you really still get embarrassed by my comments?" he asked.

"Shut up," I leaned down to kiss but, but just as our lips touched, someone grabbed me by the collar of my shirt and dragged me away.

"Please Fawn, Bill needs to rest!" said Poppy. "Why don't you leave, you can come back in an hour."

I nodded and left the Hospital Wing. Just as I stepped outside, I

heard someone yelling my name.

"FAWN! FAWN OVER HERE!"

I turned around and saw Damon, Lucas and Finley, sitting together by the Lake. Finley's white blonde hair was shining underneath the sun.

I ran over to them.

"Hi, when did you get here?" I asked, sitting down between Lucas and Finley.

"We got here an hour ago, we were talking with McGonagall." replied Damon.

"How's Bill?" asked Lucas.

"He's alright, we can visit him in about an hour. Madam Pomfrey told me." I said.

We lounged around and talked for a bit.

"I can't believe your wedding is coming up so soon!" said Lucas.

I grinned. "It's a bit scary honestly, but what about you? You three have such boring love lives."

Finley shrugged, but I noticed that Lucas and Damon both blushed a bright red.

"I'm not really looking for a relationship." said Finley, looking like her didn't care at all.

Lucas shrugged and looked down, flushing "I don't know."

"Me too." Damon mumbled, his cheeks bright.

I raised an eyebrow. "Alright then."

After an hour, we walked to the Hospital Wing to see Bill. When we walked in, Bill greeted the three boys warmly as we spent hours with Bill, then Poppy came yelling at us and told us that Bill needed

to sleep.

The next morning, was Dumbledore's funeral. The Hogwarts Express would be leaving an hour after the funeral. I had already done my packing the night before. No one seemed hungry at breakfast. Everyone was wearing their dress robes and Minnie left Dumbledore's throne like chair empty. Hagrid wasn't there this morning, and Snape's place was taken by Scrimgeour. Percy was there as well, and I made sure to make an effort of ignoring him.

At the Slytherin table, Crabbe and Goyle were looking upset and lonely without Draco with them. My heart clenched as I thought of Draco, and I tried to push him out of my mind before I started crying in front of everyone.

Minnie rose to her feet. "It is nearly time," she said. "Please follow your Heads of House out into the grounds. Gryffindor's, after me."

We went to the Lake, where hundreds of chairs were lined up neatly. An extraordinary assortment of people had already settled into half of the chairs: shabby and smart, old and young.

I found Bill, and quickly went over to him and helped him into a chair. When he sat down, I rushed back to the rest of the staff and looked around at the people who were there.
Kingsley Shacklebolt, Mad-Eye Moody, Tonks, her hair miraculously returned to vividest pink, Remus Lupin, with whom she seemed to be holding hands, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, followed by Fred and George who were wearing jackets of black dragonskin. Then there was Madame Maxime, who took up two-and-a-half chairs on her own, Tom, the landlord of the Leaky Cauldron, Arabella Figg, Harry's Squib neighbour, the hairy bass player from the wizarding group the Weird Sisters, Ernie Prang, driver of the Knight Bus, Madam Malkin, of the robe shop in Diagon Alley, and some people whom I just knew by sight, , such as the barman of the Hog's Head and the witch who pushed the trolley on the Hogwarts Express. The castle ghosts were there too, barely visible in the bright sunlight, discernible only when they moved, shimmering insubstantially in the gleaming air.

Cornelius Fudge walked past them towards the front rows, his

expression miserable, twirling his green bowler hat as usual; I next recognized Rita Skeeter, who was notebook clutched in her red-taloned hand; and then, with a worse jolt of fury, Dolores Umbridge, an unconvincing expression of grief upon her toad-like face, a black velvet bow set atop her iron colored curls. At the sight of the centaur Firenze, who was standing like a sentinel near the water's edge, she gave a start and scurried hastily into a seat a good distance away.

Hagrid was walking slowly up the aisle between the chairs. He was crying quite silently, his face gleaming with tears, and in his arms, wrapped in purple velvet spangled with golden stars, was what I knew to be Dumbledore's body. I gulped, my tears falling silently down my face. Minnie took my hand in hers.

Hagrid seemed to have placed the body carefully upon the table. Now he retreated down the aisle, blowing his nose with loud trumpeting noises that drew scandalised looks from some people. I glanced at the back row to which Hagrid was heading and realized what was guiding him, for there, dressed in a jacket and trousers each the size of a small marquee, was the giant Grawp, his great ugly boulder-like head bowed, docile, almost human. Hagrid sat down next to his half-brother and Grawp patted Hagrid hard on the head, so that his chair legs sank into the ground.

A little tufty-haired man in plain black robes had got to his feet and stood now in front of Dumbledore's body. I couldn't hear everything he was saying. Odd words floated back to us over the hundreds of beads. "Nobility of spirit"..."intellectual contribution"..."greatness of heart"...it did not mean very much to me.

The little man in black had stopped speaking at last and resumed his seat. Then several people screamed. Bright, white flames had erupted around Dumbledore's body and the table upon which it lay: higher and higher they rose, obscuring the body. White smoke spiralled into the air and made strange shapes: I thought, for one heart-stopping moment, that I saw a phoenix fly joyfully into the blue, but next second the fire had vanished. In its place was a white marble tomb, encasing Dumbledore's body and the table on which he had rested.

People began getting to their feet. I felt too stunned to move, but Minnie took my arm and pulled me up. I gave her a sad smile, before I went to find Bill. When I found him, I threw my arms around him.

"It's alright," he murmured.

~46~ Moving Harry

When we arrived back at the Burrow, Remus and Tonks announced that they were getting married. The wedding was very small, and only a few of us attended it.

Then Mad-Eye told us we would move Harry to the Burrow on July 27. And so the plan was set. Mad-Eye set Disillusionment Charms on us. The group were Bill, Damon, Lucas, Finley, Mr. Weasley, Fred, George, Kingsley, Ron, Hermione, Mad-Eye, Tonks, Sirius, Remus, Hagrid, Mundungus, and me.
Bill and I, and Hermione and Kingsley took thestrals, while everyone else took brooms. Except for Hagrid. Sirius let him use his motorbike.

We flew to Harry's house, and as we all dismounted, the Disillusionment Charms lifted. Harry opened the back door and Hermione flung herself at him, Ron clapped him on the back and Hagrid said , "All righ', Harry? Ready fer the off?"

"Definitely," said Harry, beaming around at us all. "But I wasn't expecting this many of you!"

"Change of plan," growled Mad-Eye, who was holding two enormous bulging sacks, and whose magical eye was spinning from darkening sky to house to garden with dizzying rapidity. "Let's get undercover before we talk you through it."

Harry led us all to the kitchen where we all sat or leaned against the wall, laughing and chatting.

"Harry, guess what?" said Tonks from her perch on top of the washing machine, and she wiggled her left hand at him; a ring glistened there.

You got married?" Harry yelped, looking from her to Remus.

"I'm sorry you couldn't be there, Harry, it was very quiet."

"That's brilliant, congrat –"

"All right, all right, we'll have time for a cozy catch-up later," roared Moody over the hubbub, and silence fell in the kitchen. Moody dropped his sacks at his feet and turned to Harry. "As Dedalus probably told you, we had to abandon Plan A. Pius Thicknesse has gone over, which gives us a big problem. He's made it an imprisonable offense to connect this house to the Floo Network, place a Portkey here, or Apparate in or out. All done in the name of your protection, to prevent You-Know-Who getting in at you. Absolutely pointless, seeing as your mother's charm does that already. What he's really done is to stop you getting out of here safely. "Second problem: You're underage, which means you've still got the Trace on you."

"I don't-"

"The Trace, the Trace!" said Mad-Eye impatiently. "The charm that detects magical activity around under-seventeens, the way the Ministry finds out about underage magic! If you, or anyone around you, casts a spell to get you out of here, Thicknesse is going to know about it, and so will the Death Eaters. We can't wait for the Trace to break, because the moment you turn seventeen you'll lose all the protection your mother gave you. In short, Pius Thicknesse thinks he's got you cornered good and proper."

"So what are we going to do?" asked Harry.

"We're going to use the only means of transport left to us, the only ones the Trace can't detect, because we don't need to cast spells to use them: brooms, thestrals, and Sirius' motorbike."

"Now, your mother's charm will only break under two conditions: when you come of age, or" – Moody gestured around the pristine kitchen – "you no longer call this place home. You and your aunt and uncle are going your separate ways tonight, in the full understanding that you're never going to live together again, correct?"

Harry nodded.

"So this time, when you leave, there'll be no going back, and the charm will break the moment you get outside its range. We're choosing to break it early, because the alternative is waiting for You-Know-Who to come and seize you the moment you turn seventeen. The one thing we've got on our side is that You-Know-Who doesn't know we're moving you tonight. We've leaked a fake trail to the Ministry: They think you're not leaving until the thirtieth. However, this is You-Know-Who we're dealing with, so we can't rely on him getting the date wrong; he's bound to have a couple of Death Eaters patrolling the skies in this general area, just in case. So, we've given a dozen different houses every protection we can throw at them. They all look like they could be the place we're going to hide you, they've all got some connection with the Order: my house, Kingsley's place, Molly's Auntie Muriel's – you get the idea."

"Yea," said Harry, looking a bit unconvinced.

"You'll be going to Tonks's parents. Once you're within the boundaries oft he protective enchantments we've put on their house you'll be able to use a Portkey to the Burrow. Any questions?"

"Er – yes," said Harry. "Maybe they won't know which of the twelve secure houses I'm heading for at first, but won't it be sort of obvious once eighteen of us fly off toward Tonks's parents?"

"Ah," said Moody, "I forgot to mention the key point. Eighteen of us won't be flying to Tonks's parents. There will be nine Harry Potters moving through the skies tonight, each of them with a companion, each pair heading for a different safe house." From inside his cloak Moody now withdrew a flask of what looked like mud.

"No!" said Harry loudly "No way!"

"I told them you'd take it like this," said Hermione with a hint of complacency.

"If you think I'm going to let six people risk their lives -- !" began Harry.

"—because it's the first time for all of us," said Ron.

"This is different, pretending to be me –"

"Well, none of us really fancy it, Harry," said Fred earnestly. "Imagine if something went wrong and we were stuck as specky, scrawny gits forever."

"Fred!" I said loudly.

"You can't do it if I don't cooperate, you need me to give you some hair." Harry said, crossing his arms.

"Well, that's the plan scuppered," said George. "Obviously there's no chance a tall of us getting a bit of your hair unless you cooperate."

"Yeah, seventeen of us against one bloke who's not allowed to use magic; we've got no chance," said Fred, and I couldn't help but snicker.

"Funny," Harry said. "Really amusing."

"If it has to come to force, then it will," growled Moody, his magical eye now quivering a little in its socket as he glared at Harry. "Everyone here's overage, Potter, and they're all prepared to take the risk. Let's have no more arguments. Time's wearing on. I want a few of your hairs, boy, now."

"But this is mad, there's no need –"

"No need!" snarled Moody. "With You-Know-Who out there and half the Ministry on his side? Potter, if we're lucky he'll have swallowed the fake bait and he'll be planning to ambush you on the thirtieth, but he'd be mad not to have a Death Eater or two keeping an eye out, it's what I'd do. They might not be able to get at you or this house while your mother's charm holds, but it's about to break and they know the rough position of the place. Our only chance is to use decoys. Even You-Know-Who can't split himself into seven."

Harry glanced at Ron, who grimaced at him in a just-do-it sort of way.

"Now!" barked Moody.

With all of our eyes upon him, Harry reached up to the top of his head, grabbed a hank of hair, and pulled.

"Good," said Moody, limping forward as he pulled the stopper out of the flask of potion. "Straight in here, if you please."

Harry dropped his hair into the flask, and it turned golden.

"Right then, fake Potters line up over here, please," said Moody. Me, Ron, Hermione, Fred, George, Damon, and Finley lined up in front of Aunt Petunia's gleaming sink.

"We're one short." said Remus.

"Here," said Hagrid gruffly, and he lifted Mundungus by the scruff of the neck and dropped him down beside me. I shuffled away from him and pressed myself closer to Damon.

Mad-Eye poured the potion into glasses and handed them to us. We all drank and turned into Harry. I felt myself shrink.

Fred and George turned to each other and said together, "Wow – we're identical!"

"I dunno, though, I think I'm still better-looking," said Fred, examining his reflection in the kettle.

"I can't see a single thing." I said, squinting. Harry's eyes were horrible.

We all started changing clothes and Bill chuckled.

"What?" I asked, as I removed my top, revealing my bra.

"I just never thought the first time I'd see you in your bra is when you look like Harry."

I grinned and leaned forward to kiss him. Bill screamed a small "Ahhh!" and backed away while Harry yelled "FAWN STOP!"

"I don't want to kiss Harry you idiot!" said Bill, who was hiding behind Remus.

"Yea, I don't need you to kiss Bill with my lips." said Harry.

I laughed. "I wasn't actually going to, you dumb-"

"That's enough!" yelled Mad-Eye.

Once we were all dressed, Mad-Eye turned to us. "The pairs will be as follows: Mundungus will be traveling with me, by broom –"

"Why am I with you?" muttered Mundungus.

"Because you're the one that needs watching," growled Moody, and sure enough, his magical eye did not waver from Mundungus as he continued, "Arthur and Fred –"

"I'm George," said the twin at whom Moody was pointing. "Can't you even tell us apart when we're Harry?"

"Sorry, George –"

"I'm only yanking your wand, I'm Fred really –"

"Enough messing around!" snarled Moody. "The other one – George or Fred or whoever you are – you're with Remus. Fawn, with Bill on a thestral. Miss Granger with Kingsley, again by thestral – Damon with Sirius, and Finley with Lucas."

"That leaves you with me Ron!" said Tonks brightly.

"An' you're with me, Harry. That all righ'?" said Hagrid, looking a little anxious. "We'll be on the bike, brooms an' thestrals can't take me weight, see. Not a lot o' room on the seat with me on it, though, so you'll be in the sidecar."

"That's great," said Harry

"We think the Death Eaters will expect you to be on a broom," said Mad-Eye. "Snape's had plenty of time to tell them everything about you he's never mentioned before, so if we do run into any Death Eaters, we're betting they'll choose one of the Potters who looks at home on a broomstick. All right then," he went on, tying up the sack with the fake Potters' clothes in it and leading the way back to

the door, "I make it three minutes until we're supposed to leave. No point locking the back door, it won't keep the Death Eaters out when they come looking. Come on ..."

We all went outside. Kingsley helped Hermione on a Thestral while Bill helped me on another one.

"All right, then." said Moody. "Everyone ready, please. I want us all to leave at exactly the same time or the whole point of the diversion's lost." Everybody motioned their heads.

"Hold tight now, Ron," said Tonks. I saw Ron give Remus a guilty look before he placed his hands on Tonks' waist. I smirked.

"Good luck, everyone," shouted Moody. "See you all in about an hour at the Burrow. On the count of three. One ... two .. THREE."

And we were off.

~47~ Battle Of The Nine Harry's

As we soared across the sky, we were suddenly surrounded by hooded figures.

"Fucking hell." I muttered, taking my wand out of my pocket.

Everyone separated and Death Eaters followed. Killing Curses were shot.

"Stupefy!" I yelled, managing to hit a Death Eater and he fell out of the sky.

"Aveda Kedevra!" A Death Eaters yelled, but thankfully, Bill moved the thestral out of the way as the curse flew past my head. Luckily, there were only three Death Eaters after us.

Voldemort flew at us.

"What the-"

Bill and I were close to Mad-Eye and Mudungus.

Voldemort shot a curse at Mundungus, but he Dissaperated. It all happened so quickly, but I managed to deflect the curse. Voldemort vanished just as quickly as he had appeared but the Death Eaters were onto us.

"Impedimenta!" I screamed.

With Bill steering the thestral, it was difficult for him to use his wand, but I was able to get rid of many Death Eaters, until the remaining ones stopped following us.

"They know." I panted. "They know I'm not the real Harry."

By the time we arrived at the Burrow, I was back to my own self.

Bill and I dismounted the thestral while Mad-Eye got of his broom. We saw Harry, Ron, Hermione, Kingsley, Tonks, Remus, Sirius, Damon, Mr. Weasley and Mrs. Weasley.

Mrs. Weasley rushed to us and hugged us tightly. "Oh thank goodness you're alright!"

"Where's Mundungus?" asked Ron.

"Dung panicked and Disspaperated." I snarled.

"When I find him...." Mad-Eye said angrily.

Hermione came and hugged me tightly.

"You alright Mione?" I asked.

She nodded.

"Are Lucas and Finley back?" asked Bill.

Everyone shook their heads.

I noticed Mrs. Weasley's tears streaming down her face.

"Mrs. Weasley? What's the matter?" I asked.

"George... George lost an ear."

"What?!"

We all rushed into the house to find Fred and George laughing together. George was laying on the couch, with a hole in place of where his his ear should have been.

"OH Georgie, are you alright?" I asked, kneeling down beside him.

George shrugged. "I've been better, but I'm feeling pretty *Holey!"*

I groaned, then we heard noises from outside. We went back out to see Lucas and Finley jumping off their brooms.

Damon bolted to Lucas and hugged him tightly, before they pulled

back and smiled, keeping their arms around each other.

"Are you alright Lucas?" asked Damon.

Lucas nodded. "Yeah, we managed to throw the Death Eater's off. What about you?"

Damon smiled. "Sirius and I killed a few."

They looked at each other lovingly, and my mouth dropped open. Damon and Lucas noticed we were staring at them and quickly stepped away from each other, blushing.

"You two-?" I asked.

They looked almost ashamed. Then it hit me. The reason they never dated anyone. They reason they'd get so flustered when someone asked about their dating life. Because they liked each other.

"Why didn't you ever tell me?" I asked, crossing my arms over my chest.

Lucas shrugged. "I didn't know how you'd take it."

"Take it? You both are idiots of you think I'd take it badly."

"Same here." said Bill.

"Me too." Finley butt in.

They smiled and took each others hands. We all walked back into the house.

"So Mundungus disappeared?" asked Remus.

"I know what you're thinking." said Bill. "and I wondered that too, on the way back here, because they seemed to be expecting us, didn't they? But Mundungus can't have betrayed us. They didn't know there would be seven Harrys, that confused them the moment we appeared, and in case you've forgotten, it was Mundungus who suggested that little bit of skullduggery. Why wouldn't he have told them the essential point? I think Dung panicked, it's as simple as

that. He didn't want to come in the first place, but Mad-Eye made him, and You-Know-Who went straight for them. It was enough to make anyone panic."

"You-Know-Who acted exactly as I thought he would." snarled Mad-Eye.

"But we still don't know how they knew we were moving Harry tonight!" I said.

"Someone must have let it slip." said Sirius bitterly.

"It's the only explanation." said Lucas.

"No," said Harry.

We all turned to look at him.

"I mean.... if someone made a mistake, and let something slip, I know they didn't mean it. We've all got to trust each other, and I don't believe that any of you would ever sell me to Voldemort."

"Well said," said Fred.

"Year, 'ear, 'ear." said George.

Remus was looking at Harry with a pitying expression.

"You think I'm a fool?" demanded Harry.

"No, I think you're like James." Remus said.

"James would have regarded it as the height of dishonor to mistrust his friends." said Sirius.

After we all calmed down, Fred suddenly said "Wait, *you two?"*

We all turned to see Fred staring at Lucas and Damon, who were holding hands.

They flushed and nodded.

"Damn it!" said Fred angrily.

George burst out laughing. "I TOLD YOU FREDDIE I TOLD YOU."

Fred groaned.

"You owe me ten galleons." said George happily.

Fred grumbled and left the room.

"What the fuck is happening?" I asked. "Sorry." I added, as Mrs. Weasley glared at me for my language.

"I made a bet with Fred." said George. "I told him that Lucas and Damon like each other. Fred was not convinced. So now I win!"

Lucas burst out laughing. "Were you really betting on us?"

Damon chuckled and shook his head.

"I've got to go." said Harry suddenly.

We all turned to look at him.

"Don't be silly Harry," said Mrs. Weasley. "What are you talking about?"

"You're all in danger while I'm here. I can't stay-"

"But don't be silly!" said Mrs. Weasley. "The whole point of tonight was to get you here safely!"

"If Voldemort finds out I'm here...."

"But why should he?" asked Mrs. Weasley.

"There are a dozen places where you could be Harry," said Mr. Weasley. "He's got no way of knowing which safehouse you're in."

"It's not me I'm worried for!" said Harry.

"We know that!" I said.

"But it would make our efforts tonight seem rather pointless if you left." said Mr. Weasley.

"Yer not goin anywhere." growled Hagrid. "After all we've been through tonight."

"There's no chance you're leaving Potter." snarled Mad-Eye.

"Yea," said George. "What about my bleeding ear?"

"I know that...."

"Harry we risked our lives to get you to safety!" I said.

"I KNOW THAT!"

Harry stared at us angrily.

"Where's Hedwig Harry?" asked Mrs. Weasley.

Harry muttered something about needing fresh air, and he walked out into the garden. Ron and Hermione followed him. I rubbed my face with my hands and Bill squeezed my hand.

"At least we have the wedding to forward to!" said Sirius, trying to lighten our moods.

I smiled at his efforts.

~ ~ ~

Over the next few days, Mrs. Weasley kept everyone very busy with the wedding preparations.

One night, as we ate dinner, Mrs. Weasley turned to Ron.

"Now Ron, have you cleaned out your room?" she asked him.

"Why?" asked Ron, slamming his fork down on the table. "Why does my room have to be cleaned out? Harry and I are fine with the way it is!"

"We are holding your brothers wedding here in a few days young man..."

"And are they getting married in my room?" asked Ron angrily. "No! So why in the name of Merlin's left saggy....."

"Don't talk to your mother like that!" said Mr. Weasley. "And do as you're told!"

Ron scowled at both of his parents.

~ ~ ~

Harry's birthday rolled around. Charlie and Rue were finally coming. When they arrived, Rue and I flung ourselves at each other.

"FAWNNNN! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED TOMORROW." she yelled, tears forming in her eyes.

"No need to get all emotional Rue!" I said, laughing.

Mrs. Weasley grabbed Charlie and started cutting his hair brutally short.

"It's just so long!" she said to Charlie.

"Mum, just leave it-"

"Stop moving Charlie!"

We all continued with decorating the place for Harry's birthday dinner. Mrs. Weasley walked in holding a large golden cake that looked like a Snitch.

When seven o'clock rolled around, Finley, Lucas, Damon, Hagrid, Mad-Eye, Sirius, Remus and Tonks showed up. Hagrid handed Harry his gift.

"And-ah there's Charlie! I've always liked Charlie!" said Hagrid.

I turned to see Charlie walking over and running a hand ruefully over his new haircut.

"Hi Hagrid, how's it going?" he asked.

"Been' meenin ter right fer ages, how's Norbert doing?"

"Norbert?" said Charlie. "You mean the Norwegian Ridgeback? We call her Norberta now."

"Wha-- Norbert's a girl?"

"Oh yeah," said Charlie.

"How can you tell?" asked Hermione.

"They're a lot more vicious." he looked over his shoulder and dropped his voice. "I wish Dad would hurry up and get here. Mum's getting a bit edgy."

We all looked at Mrs. Weasley. She was trying to talk to Tonks while she kept glancing nervously at the gate.

"I think we'd better start without Arthur," she called to the garden at large after a moment or two. "He must have been held up at -- oh!"

We all saw it at the same time: a streak of light that came flying across the yard and onto the table, where it resolved itself into a bright silver weasel, which stood on its hind legs and spoke with Mr. Weasley's voice.

"The Minister is coming with me."

The Patronus Dissolved in midair.

"We shouldn't be here." said Remus at once. "Harry-I'm sorry-I'll explain another time."

He grabbed Tonks' wrist and pulled her away. When they climbed over the fence, they Dissaperated.

Seconds later, Mr. Weasley appeared out of thin air with Scrimgeour.

"Sorry to intrude," said Scrimgeour, as he limped to a halt before the table. "Especially as I can see that I am gate-crashing a party."

He looked at the cake. "Many happy returns."

"Thanks." said Harry.

"I require a private word with you," Scrimgeour went on. "Also with

Mr. Ronald Weasley and Miss Hermione Granger."

"Us?" asked Ron. "Why us?"

"I shall tell you that when we are somewhere more private," said Scrimgeour. "Is there such a place?' he demanded of Mr. Weasley

"Yes, of course," said Mr. Weasley, who looked nervous. "The, er, sitting room, why don't you use that?"

"You can lead the way," Scrimgeour said to Ron. "There will be no need for you to accompany us, Arthur."

And they left to the living room. We all looked at each other.

"What does he want?" asked Lucas.

"I don't know," said Mr. Weasley. "All he said was that he needed to speak with Ron, Harry and Hermione."

We all sat in silence. After a bit, loud shouting was heard from inside. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley rushed inside to check.

Scrimgeour limped out and Mrs. Weasley followed.

"Good day to you all," Scrimgeour said, before Dissaperating.

After the others came back, we all started to eat dinner. After eating the cake, the party broke up. Bill and I went to our room. I snuggled next to him.

"I can't believe it," I said. "The wedding is tomorrow!"

Bill smiled, wrapping his arms around my waist. "Time flies."

I traced the scars on his face with my fingers. "It doesn't hurt anymore does it?"

He shook his head, and took my hand, lacing our fingers together. "No it doesn't, but I get a bit shocked when I see myself in the mirror." he admitted.

I held back a sob. Bill felt my shaking body because he wrapped me

in his arms tighter. "Oh, please don't cry, I'm alright."

He kissed me deeply as we fell asleep.

~48~ The Wedding

The morning of the wedding was a rush of excitement. Everyone was preparing last minute things, people were still picking out their clothes. Ginny, Rue, Hermione and Tonks wouldn't leave my side.

"Mum can't wait to finally meet you!" said Tonks.

I grinned.

After a small lunch, everyone started to get ready for the wedding. I was in my room, trying to zip up my wedding dress, but it wouldn't fit. My eyes puffy and red form crying, feeling a bit silly that I was so emotional about the dress. I heard a knock on the door.

"Come in!" I called out, and Ginny, Rue, Hermione, Tonks, Fred and George burst into the room.

"Why are you crying?" asked Hermione.

"The stupid zipper won't fit!" I said angrily, my voice cracking. "It fit just yesterday!"

"Are you sure you're not pregnant?" asked Fred.

"Mum wouldn't be too happy about that." said George.

I glared that them and they backed away.

"It's nothing a little wand-work won't fix." said Rue gently, after she had given the twins a glare like mine.

She pointed her wand at my zipper and I felt it slide up easily.

"Thanks." I said. "I didn't even think about that."

"You're just nervous," said Ginny. "It's normal!"

I laughed. "You've never been married Gin."

She shrugged.

The girls started to help me with my hair and makeup. Fred and George made the mistake of staying for too long, because soon they were forced to help.

"Fred, pass me that clip."

"George, where did that brush go?"

"Stop doing that Fred, you're making a mess of the eyeshadow!"

"George I said mascara, you gave me lipstick!"

"How am I supposed to know?" said George, looking irritated.

After they finished, everyone complimented me, even the twins.

"You look so beautiful!" said Ginny, kissing my cheek.

"Very stunning." agreed Tonks.

"The dress looks great on you." said Rue.

"You're earrings match you're eyes!" said Hermione.

"You do look very lovely," said Fred.

"Very lovely," agreed George. "Now we finally have a pretty sister!"

Ginny and Rue glared at him.

"Er, I meant, now we finally have *three* pretty sisters!"

He bolted from the room and Fred followed. We all burst out laughing.

The girls left to go finish with the wedding tent.

After a while, Mrs. Weasley came in with an elderly looking witch.

"This is my Auntie Muriel." said Mrs. Weasley. "And this is Fawn."

I smiled and stuck out my hand. "It's a pleasure to meet you."

She smiled. "Very polite at least, I thought she'd be a snobby little thing."

I glanced at Mrs. Weasley in confusion and she grimaced.

"Gained a bit of weight have you?" she asked, poking me in the stomach, and Mrs. Weasley closed her eyes, as if trying to regain herself.

"Oh well I didn't think I was that...." I began, but she cut me off.

"So much makeup! And your bosoms are sticking out!"

I looked down at my covered chest. "But It's not even-"

"Now," said Muriel. "I'm going to show you how to best wear the tiara."

She pulled it out of her bag and showed me how to wear it. After about an hour (with her yelling at me) she was finally satisfied with my tiara wearing skills.

"Very nice." she said, just as Hermione walked in.

"I just wanted to check on you-, oh hello you must be-"

"Oh dear, this the Muggle-born?" Muriel asked, looking Hermione up and down. "Bad posture and skinny ankles."

Then she walked out of the room.

~ ~ ~

I was standing outside of the wedding tent. Everyone was inside and seated, and so was Bill and Charlie.

Since I had no father, Mr. Weasley would walk me down the aisle.

"Don't be nervous," he said, as I rubbed my hands together and kept fixing myself. "You look beautiful."

I smiled. "Thanks Dad-" I flushed a bright red. "I mean Mr. Weasley!

Or Arthur, I mean-"

Mr. Weasley flushed too. I had always looked up to Mr. Weasley and Mrs. Weasley as the loving parents that I'd never had.

"You can call me Dad if you'd like." said Mr. Weasley, looking happy and I smiled.

I took his arm and we walked down the aisle.

I smiled when I saw Bill. Tears formed in his eyes and he looked as if he'd never met Greyback.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said a slightly singsong voice. "We are gathered here today to celebrate the union of two faithful souls..."

"Yes, my tiara set off the whole thing nicely," said Auntie Muriel in a rather carrying whisper. "But I must say, Ginevra's dress is far too low cut."

I bit my lip and Bill tried not to make a face.

"Do you, William Arthur, take Fawn Black-"

In the front row, Mrs. Weasley, Andromeda and Rue were sobbing very loudly.

"...then I declare you bonded for life."

Everyone clapped and balloons burst, Birds of paradise and tiny golden bells flew and floated out of them, adding their songs and chimes to the din.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" called the tufty-haired wizard. "If you would please stand up!"

They all did so, Auntie Muriel grumbling audibly; he waved his wand again. The seats on which they had been sitting rose gracefully into the air as the canvas walls of the marquee vanished, so that they stood beneath a canopy supported by golden poles, with a glorious view of the sunlit orchard and surrounding countryside. Next, a pool of molten gold spread from the center of

the tent to form a gleaming dance floor; the hovering chairs grouped themselves around small, white-clothed tables, which all floated gracefully back to earth round it, and the golden-jacketed hand trooped toward a podium.

People came rushing over to congratulate us.

"Congratulations Professor Black!" said Luna Lovegood, beaming at us.

"Why thank you Luna," I said. "You look lovely tonight."

"Thank you." she said dreamily, before floating away.

Andromeda came over and gave me a bone-crushing hug.

"Oh Fawn! I'm so happy to finally meet you! Congratulations! You look so beautiful."

"Andromeda! Oh my goodness I don't know what to say!"

Andromeda and I talked for ages, before everyone else had the chance to come over and congratulate Bill and I.

"Married!" said Finley happily. "About time!"

Bill laughed. "It really is."

Lucas and Damon hugged me, and Damon spun me around.

The band began to play and Bill grabbed my hand and dragged me to the dance floor. He placed his hands on my waist and I put mine on his shoulders. After a while, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley started dancing as well. Soon, many couples started joining in. Remus and Tonks were swaying past us. Ron and Hermione had started dancing too, Hermione looking very pleased. Lucas and Damon were looking very awkward but stared at each other happily. Damon winked at me when they waltzed past.

"I'm really happy for them." I said to Bill.

He nodded. "Me too, they look happy together."

As we were dancing, something large and silver came falling through the canopy over the dance floor. Graceful and gleaming, the lynx landed lightly in the middle of the astonished dancers. Heads turned, as those nearest it froze absurdly in mid-dance. Then the Patronus's mouth opened wide and it spoke in the loud, deep, slow voice of Kingsley Shacklebolt.

"The Ministry has fallen. Scrimgeour is dead. They are coming."

There was silence as peopled were trying to understand what just happened. Bill and I drew out our wands, then someone screamed. Guests were sprinting in all directions; many were Disapparating; the protective enchantments around the Burrow had broken.

I saw Harry, Ron and Hermione Disapparating. Death Eaters' arrived and started interrogating everyone.

"Where is Harry Potter!" said one loudly.

For hours, they checked the burrow from top to bottom. They found the Weasley's ghoul, but it was transfigured to look as if Ron had a bad case of spattergroit, and the Death Eater's didn't question it.

Thankfully, no one was hurt. That night, Bill and I moved to our new place, Shell Cottage. It's a very cozy place. When we Apparated, Bill scooped me up bridal style and took me to our room. He dropped my onto the bed and laid down next to me. We were both happy, to finally be a married couple, but we were so worried for everyone.

"I saw Ron, Harry and Hermione leave." said Bill.

"I hope they're alright." I said.

It was very difficult for me to sleep that night. Bill had managed to fall asleep and was now snoring slightly. I kept tossing and turning and I decided to go to the kitchen to make myself some tea. As I was sitting down and drinking, Bill walked downstairs.

"You alright love?" he asked, drawing up a chair and sitting next to me. "I got worried when I saw that the bed was empty."

"I'm alright, just worried for the others."

Bill kissed my forehead. "They'll be fine. We'll be fine."

~49~ A Fight With Remus

Over the next few weeks, I was starting to feel better. With Bill and I not working, we spent our days cuddled up together.

One night as I was taking a shower, I heard the door of the bathroom open and found the shower curtain suddenly being wrenched apart and Bill stepped in.

"Bill!" I said, putting a hand to my heart. "You gave me a fright!"

"What, I can't take a shower with my wife?" he asked cheekily.

I smirked and turned away, washing the soap away from my face. Bill wrapped his arms around my waist and I leaned against him, letting the warm water fall onto us.

I grabbed the shampoo and turned around in his arms, and began putting shampoo in his hair. We both started laughing as I made his hair stick up.

He grabbed some soap and put it on my chin, making a beard. I giggled and we washed the soap off. I pressed my lips against his as his hands pulled me closer to him.

Suddenly, we heard a knock at the door and we pulled away.

"Were you expecting anyone?" asked Bill.

I shook my head.

With Voldemort being at power, everyone was sending Patronuses of when they would be visiting, as to not scare anyone.

The knock came again, louder this time.

"I doubt it's a Death Eater," said Bill, as we quickly got dressed.

"They would have blasted the door apart." I said, nodding.

I ran downstairs and opened the door, holding my wand.

"Remus?" I asked. "What are you doing here?"

Remus was standing at the doorstep, looking upset.

"Can I come in?" he asked.

I stepped aside and let him in, just as Bill came down.

"Who is it...Remus!"

We all sat at the kitchen table.

"What's wrong?" I asked Remus.

Remus stayed silent, before saying "Tonks is pregnant."

I jumped up and Bill clapped his back.

"Oh congrats!" I said, hugging Remus. "Wow, I'm going to have a grand niece!"

Remus gave a small smile.

"Rem, what's wrong?" I asked.

"I- I've made a mistake."

"What are you talking about?" asked Bill.

"I've made a mistake in marrying her, my child will be like me!"

"Remus just-"

"I tried to go with Harry, Ron and Hermione but Harry got angry and me and I left."

"Oh Remus I-, hold on, what do you mean you tried to go *with* the three?"

He looked up. "I- I left Tonks, with her parents."

I narrowed my eyes. "You what?"

He paled as he looked at my angry face. "She's safer with her parents-"

"So you just left her?" I said angrily.

"You don't understand-"

"Yes I do!" I yelled. "You left your wife and child!"

"No, I mean yes but-"

I slapped Remus and drew my wand out.

"Fawn!" said Bill, pulling at my arm.

"You have three seconds to get out of my house."

"Wait, Fawn just let me-" began Remus.

"You left my pregnant niece!" I raged. "GET OUT!"

Remus left the house and I grabbed Bill's hand.

"Where are we-?" he asked, as I dragged him outside.

"To Andromeda's house."

We Apparated and I pounded on the door.

"It's me Fawn!" I said.

Andromeda opened the door. "Fawn I-"

"Where's Tonks?"

"In the living room, she's a bit upset right now Remus-"

"I know." I said.

Andromeda led Bill and I to the living room, where Tonks was sitting with Ted.

"Tonks!"

"Oh Fawn," she wailed, when she saw me. "He just left! I know he's scared but, I need him I-"

"Nymphadora Tonks-Lupin!" I said loudly. "You do not *need* Remus! Look, I admit, when he came just now, I got angry at him and kicked him out. But I understand that he's worried about you and your child. He will come back, I'm sure of it."

~50~ Ron

"Hey Bill, have you seen my shirt?" I asked.

I had taken off my shirt to fix a rip in it, but now I couldn't find it.

"You mean this one?" Bill asked.

I turned around to see him holding up my shirt.

"Thanks." I reached for it but he held it back.

"No, you can't have it." he said.

"Bill!"

Bill dropped my shirt on the floor and in one swift movement, I was pinned to the bed, with Bill hovering on top of me.

"Bill." I whispered.

"Fawn." he whispered back.

"Kiss me."

Bill leaned down and kissed me gently, before pulling away. I placed my hands behind his neck, as he leaned down again, kissing me more deeply this time. I breathed out a small sigh as his hands trailed down my exposed stomach. He kissed my jaw, and his lips trailed down onto my neck, and chest, before he kissed my stomach, and trailed back to my lips. I pulled off Bill's shirt and tossed it aside. Bill pulled off my pants, and just as he was about to pull down my underwear, I had a fleeting image of back when I was twelve, and was with my date. I panicked and jerked away from Bill.

"What?" asked Bill, looking at me with concern. "Are you alright darling?"

I-, I'm sorry." I said, looking away.

"Sorry for what?"

"I just panicked, I'm sorry." I said, tears starting to roll down my face. "I'm sorry! It's been over ten years and I still feel traumatized I'm so stupid-"

Bill finally understood what was happening as I started to sob. "Oh Fawn, no don't be sorry!" he scooped me into his arms. "You're not stupid. Oh Fawn, I should've asked first I'm the one who should be sorry, I forgot."

I cried onto Bill's shoulder, and he kissed my forehead.

"It's been so long," I said. "And I still don't feel ok. I feel like I'm a horrible wife."

Bill gasped. "Don't ever say that! You aren't a horrible wife at all. If you think that just because you're scared to have sex, it's not the only thing I want from you. I'll wait as long as you need love."

I sniffed and buried my face into his neck, as we sat in silence, listening to the ocean waves.

~ ~ ~

After that moment with Bill, he was a lot more careful and decided to let me make the moves with anything intimate. One night, as we were eating dinner, we heard a knock on the door.

"I'll get it." said Bill, drawing his wand out.

I heard Bill open the door and he let out a yell of happiness. "Ron!"

Bill and Ron came into the kitchen and I jumped up.

"Oh Ron, you look horrible!" I said. "Here, have some food we were just eating dinner."

I made a plate for Ron and placed it in front of him. Ron ate hungrily and Bill and I watched him. When Ron finished eating, we started bombarding him with questions.

"Where were you three?" I asked.

"And where are they?" asked Bill.

"Why aren't you with them?"

"Why do you look so upset?"

"What are you three supposed to be doing?"

"Why aren't you and Hermione in school?"

"Calm down!" said Ron. "I can't tell you where we were or what we were doing. But, I had a fight with Harry and I left."

I groaned. "You did a Remus!"

Ron grimaced. "It was different! It wasn't like I got Hermione pregnant or something."

Bill and I stared at him and he turned a bright pink.

"I didn't mean it in that way!" he said. "Hermione and I never even kissed!"

"So.... you got Harry pregnant?" I asked.

"Fawn!"

"Sorry," I said. "So, are you going back to them?"

"I don't know how to."

"You can stay with us mate," said Bill. "We have a couple of extra rooms, you can pick the one you like the best."

"I hope I don't have to hear noises at night." Ron said grinning, looking between Bill and I.

I flushed a bright red. "Don't worry you won't." I muttered.

"Muffliato?"

"No!" I said. "We didn't even do it yet!"

"Really, but you've been married for like two months..."

I got up from my chair and stormed up to my room.

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Ron never questioned our married life again, and he spent all his time trying to figure out how to get back to Harry and Hermione.

Soon, my birthday rolled around and Bill and Ron had woken me up at six in the morning, yelling in my year "HAPPY BIRTHDAY FAWN!"

I screamed and fell out of my bed. "Bill! Ron!"

Bill helped me up. "Come downstairs!"

That day, Bill had revealed that he had made me a cake, and we all ate. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, Andromeda, Tonks, Ted, Lucas, Damon, and Finley had come to celebrate with me.

And then December came, and Bill's birthday rolled around. While Bill was in the shower, the night before, I was in the kitchen baking a cake, and Ron helped me.

"So," I said. "Have you figured out how to find them?"

"Not yet," he said, as he helped me with the icing. "I'm working on it."

Ron eventually decided to leave, a few days after Bill's birthday.

"Be safe Ron," said Bill.

"Don't do anything drastic." I said, hugging him tightly.

I handed him a bunch of food and water to take with him.

"You remind me a lot of Mum." said Ron fondly, as I handed him a bag.

I smiled and we watched as he left and Disapparated.
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~51~ Dobby & Another Funeral

The next few months passed fairly quickly. One day during March, I was in the kitchen cleaning when I heard a loud pop from outside. I drew my wand out, and rushing out, I saw a house-elf holding onto Luna Lovegood, Dean Thomas and Garrick Ollivander.

The three of them looked horrible.

"What in the name of- BILL GET OUT HERE NOW!"

Bill came rushing out. "Fawn what's-?"

The house-elf turned to me. "Ronald Wheezy told Dobby to bring his friends to Bill and Fawn, Shell Cottage on the outskirts of Tinsworth!"

"Ron?" Bill asked. "What?"

"Wheezy?" I couldn't help saying.

"Dobby must go save Harry Potter and his friends!" The house-elf Dobby Disapparated.

Bill and I turned to the others. Ollivander looked half-dead, and so Bill and I carried him to a room. We all went back outside to see Harry kneeling down, Griphook the goblin, and Ron carrying Hermione.

"What happened?" I asked.

Ron shook his head and Bill helped him bring Hermione into the house. Then, Bill, Luna, Dean and I went back outside to Harry, who was holding onto Dobby's lifeless body. I gasped.

"Dobby.....Dobby...." Harry cried.

But Dobby was gone. I felt tears spring into my eyes. I didn't know Dobby, but I knew that he died to save the others.

Harry looked up with red eyes. "Hermione, where is she?"

"Ron's taken her inside," answered Bill. "She'll be alright."

Harry looked back down at Dobby and took the knife from his little body. Harry took off his jacket and wrapped Dobby in it like a blanket.

Dean carried Griphook into the house, and I hurried after them.

"We can put him in this room," I told Dean, showing him a room.

Dean put Griphook on a bed, and I gave him some Skele-Grow. After Griphook fell asleep, we left the room.

"Thanks Professor Black," he said.

"Just call me Fawn," I said with a smile.

We went back outside, just as I heard Harry say to Bill, "I want to do it properly. Not by magic, have you got a spade?"

Bill him to a place at the end of the garden and Harry got to work. He didn't want any help, refusing point-black when I offered to help dig the grave.

I went back inside to look after Hermione. She was still shivering and Ron wouldn't tell me what happened.

"Bill, why don't you make some tea for them." I said.

Bill nodded and hurried to the kitchen. I smoothed Hermione's hair away from her face and covered her with some blankets.

"You'll be alright." I whispered, as I stroked her hair.

I could see Harry from the window, digging, and digging.

"You two should check on Harry," I told Ron and Dean. "I'll take care of Hermione."

Ron looked reluctant but Dean patted his shoulder and they left. After a bit, we all decided to go out. I gave Luna one of my warm coats. I wrapped Hermione in a blanket and helped her across the garden.

"We should close his eyes," said Luna, as we all reached Harry, Ron and Dean.

Luna closed Dobby's eyes. "Now he could be sleeping."

Harry placed the elf into the grave, arranged his tiny limbs so that he might have been resting, then climbed out and gazed for the last time upon the little body.

"I think we should say something." said Luna. "Shall I go first?"

We all looked at her.

"Thank you so much Dobby for rescuing me from that cellar. It's so unfair that you had to die when you were so good and brave. I'll always remember what you did for us. I hope you're happy now."

Luna turned to Ron, who cleared his throat. "Thank Dobby,"

"Thanks." muttered Dean.

"Good-bye Dobby," said Harry thickly.

I tried not to let out a sob, as I looked at how upset Harry was. It was obvious he was close with Dobby.

"Do you mind if I stay here a moment?" asked Harry.

We all nodded and started going back into the house.

"...lucky that Ginny's on holiday." Bill was saying. "If she'd been at Hogwarts they could have taken her before we reached her. Now we know she's safe too." He looked around and saw Harry standing there. "I've been getting them all out of the Burrow," he explained. "Moved them to Muriel's. The Death Eaters know Ron's with you now, they're bound to target the family –don't apologize," he added at the sight of Harry's expression. "It was always a matter of time,

Dad's been saying so for months. We're the biggest blood traitor family there is."

"How are they protected?" asked Harry.

"Fidelius Charm. Dad's Secret Keeper. And we've done it on this cottage too; I'm Secret-Keeper here. None of us can go to work, but that's hardly the most important thing now. Once Ollivander and Griphook are well enough, we'll move them to Muriel's too. There isn't much room here, but she's got plenty. Griphook's legs are on the mend. Fawn's given him Skele-Gro, we could probably move them in an hour or—"

"No," Harry said and Bill looked startled. "I need both of them here. I need to talk to them. It's important."

We all stared at him.

Harry looked at his dirty and bloody hands. "I'm going to wash, then I'll need to see them, straight away."

Harry turned around and walked to the kitchen. Bill and I gave each other confused looks. Bill and I went to the foot of the stairs to wait for Harry to come. Harry came out of the kitchen and saw us.

"I need to speak with Ollivander and Griphook."

"No," I said. "They're tired and they need to rest Harry. You'll have to wait-"

"I'm sorry," said Harry. "But it can't wait. I need to talk to them now. Privately, and separately, it's urgent."

"Harry, what the hell is going on?" asked Bill. "you turn up here with a dead house-elf and a half--conscious goblin, Hermione looks like she's been tortured and Ron's just refused to tell us anything."

"We can't tell you what we're doing," said Harry flatly. "You're both in the Order, Bill and Fawn, you know Dumbledore left us a mission. We're not supposed to talk about it to anyone else."

I made a noise of annoyance, but Bill didn't look at me. He kept

staring at Harry. Finally, Bill said, "All right. Who do you want to talk to first?"

Harry hesitated. "Griphook, I'll speak to Griphook first."

"Up here, then," said Bill, leading the way.

Harry had walked up several steps before stopping and looking back. "I need you two as well!" he called to Ron and Hermione, who had been skulking, half concealed, in the doorway of the sitting room. They both moved into the light, looking oddly relieved.

I stayed downstairs until Bill came down.

"Let's go have some tea," he said, putting his arm around me and leading me to the kitchen.

I called for Luna and Dean and they appeared at the doorway of the kitchen.

"Come have some tea." I told him, motioning to the kitchen table.

Luna and Dean sat down as Bill and I bustled around the kitchen, making tea. I snuck glances at the two teenagers. They looked tired. Dean rubbed his face hard, and Luna kept fiddling with my jacket that she was wearing.

I placed the tea's in front of them. "Here you go,"

"Thank you." said Luna.

"Thanks." muttered Dean.

Bill and I sat down, sipping our own tea. It was silent, as we all drank. After a while, I heard footsteps coming down the stairs, and we all looked up to see Harry, Ron and Hermione passing by. Harry gave us a nod and the three of them continued out to the garden.

"So," said Luna, turning to me. "Are you going to teach again at Hogwarts?"

"I'm not sure yet Luna, maybe next year if...if things are better."

No one really knew what to say, so we sat in more silence.

~ ~ ~

A few nights later, I was in the room with Bill. I leaned over and kissed him. He looked at me with surprise.

"It's been a while since you last kissed me." he said.

"I know," I said, blushing slightly, before I kissed him again.

Bill smiled against my lips and wrapped me closer to him. I rolled on top of him, now straddling him and I gently pulled off his shirt. He starting pulling my shirt off too, and we threw them to the side, not once letting my lips leave his. I starting kissing him down to his bare chest, tracing his scars with my lips. I unbuttoned his pants and starting pulling them down.

Bill opened his eyes. "A-are you s-sure?"

I nodded and Bill grinned, grabbing his wand, pointing it at the door and saying "Muffliato!"

He put his wand back on the bedside table and flipped me over, before he starting kissing my neck. He kicked off his pants before pulling down mine. I wrapped my arms around my neck as he kissed my lips. I wanted him. *All of him.* I was ready.

That night was the best night of my life.

~52~ Remus and Tonks Son

Harry, Ron, Hermione, Luna, Dean, Griphook and Ollivander stayed with us for a while. Harry, Ron and Hermione were constantly talking together, but whenever any of us would walk by them, they'd be silent. They started taking their conversations out to the garden.

On the third day of the others arrival, as I was giving Griphook some food, he asked to see Harry, Ron and Hermione.

"Alright, I'll go get them." I said.

I walked out of the house and found them talking.

"Griphook wants to speak to you. He's in the smallest bedroom, he doesn't want to be overheard." I told them as I led them to the room. They went inside and I closed the door.

The days grew into weeks, and Harry, Ron and Hermione were always shut up in the room with Griphook. But no matter how much I asked, none of them would say a word about what they were doing or talking about. Bill however, never asked any questions, but he'd look at Harry with concern.

After Griphook's legs were mended, he still requested the food to be brought up to him. I got very irritated as I knew he could walk, so Bill told Griphook that he'd have to come downstairs to eat meals, although he refused to eat the same food, insisting, instead, on lumps of raw meat, roots, and various fungi.

"I'm sorry Fawn," Harry told me, one April evening as he helped me prepare dinner. "I never meant you to have to deal with all of this."

"It's alright Harry," I said kindly, as I cut up steaks for Griphook and Bill, who had preferred his meat bloody ever since he had been attacked by Greyback. I pointed my wand at the stove. "Mr. Ollivander leaves for Muriel's this evening. That'll make things

easier. The goblin can stay I suppose, he can move downstairs and you, Ron and Dean can take that room."

"No, we don't mind sleeping in the living room." he said. "Don't worry about us."

"But-"

"We'll be off your hands soon, Ron, Hermione and I. We won't need to be here much longer."

"What are you talking about?" I asked. "You can't leave, you're safe here!"

Harry looked a bit scared when he saw my angry and worried face, but Luna and Dean came in with damp hair, carrying driftwood.

"... and tiny little ears," Luna was saying, "a bit like hippo's, Daddy says, only purple and hairy. And if you want to call them, you have to hum; they prefer a waltz, nothing too fast...."

Looking uncomfortable, Dean shrugged at Harry and I as he passed, following Luna into the combined dining and sitting room where Ron and Hermione were laying the dinner table. Harry grabbed two jugs of pumpkin juice and followed them. I grabbed some plates and followed them.

"... and if you ever come to our house I'll be able to show you the horn, Daddy wrote to me about it but I haven't seen it yet, because the Death Eaters took me from the Hogwarts Express and I never got home for Christmas," Luna was saying, as she and Dean relit the fire

"Luna, we told you," Hermione called over to her. "That horn exploded. It came from an Erumpent, not a Crumple-Horned Snorkack --"

"No, it was definitely a Snorkack horn," said Luna serenely, "Daddy told me. It will probably have re-formed by now, they mend themselves, you know."

Hermione shook her head and continued laying down forks as Bill

appeared, leading Mr. Ollivander down the stairs. The wandmaker still looked exceptionally frail, and he clung to Bill's arm as the latter supported him, carrying a large suitcase.

"I'm going to miss you, Mr. Ollivander," said Luna, approaching the old man.

"And I you, my dear," said Ollivander, patting her on the shoulder.

"Goodbye Mr. Ollivander, also could you do me a favour and deliver a package to Muriel?" I said, after hugging him lightly. "I never returned her tiara.

"It will be an honor," said Ollivander with a little bow. "It's the very least I could do for your generous hospitality."

I handed Ollivander a velvet case that had the tiara in it, and Bill and the wandmaker set off into the night. The rest of us sat down to eat. I kept glancing out the window every few minutes, but luckily, he returned before we even finished the first course, his long hair tangled from the wind.

"Everything's fine," he said to me. "Ollivander settled in, Mum and Dad say hello, Ginny sends all of you her love, Fred and George are driving Muriel up the wall. They're still operating Owl-Order business out of her back room. She was cheered up to have her tiara back though, she said she thought we'd stolen it."

"How charming, your aunt is." I said crossly, as I began cleaning the dirty plates. "Did you know she called me fat before the wedding?"

Bill looked at me. "Well, you have gained a bit of--"

He was cut off by me smacking on the face with a napkin. "Excuse me!"

The table erupted with laughter, except for Griphook.

"You two are so funny and cute together!" said Luna, doubling over from laughter.

I smiled at her. There was a sudden bang at the door, and we all

looked at each other alarmed. Bill pointed his wand at the door. Ron, Harry, Hermione and I did the same.

"It is I, Remus John Lupin!" called a voice over the howling wind. "I am a werewolf, married to Nymphadora Tonks, and you, the Secret-Keeper of Shell Cottage, told me the address and bade me come in an emergency!"

"Lupin," Bill muttered, rushing to the door and opening it.

Remus fell over the threshold. He was white-faced, wrapped in a traveling cloak, his graying hair windswept. He straightened up, looked around the room, making sure of who was there, then cried aloud, "It's a boy! We've named him Ted, after Dora's father!"

Hermione shrieked."Wha --? Tonks -- Tonks has had the baby?"

"Yes, yes, she's had the baby!" shouted Remus.

All around the table came cries of delight, sighs of relief: Hermione and I both squealed "Congratulations!" as I hugged Remus tightly.

Ron said, "Blimey, a baby!" as if he had never heard of such a thing before.

Luna and Dean said "Congratulations!" to their old professor.

"Yes -- yes -- a boy," said Remus again, who seemed dazed by his own happiness. He strode around the table and hugged Harry. "You'll be the Godfather?"

"M-me?" stammered Harry.

"You, yes, of course-Dora agrees, no one better."

"I-yeah-blimey!"

Remus turned to me. "And will you be Godmother?"

I beamed. "Oh of course!"

Bill hurried away to get some wine while I told Remus to stay for a

drink.

"I can't stay long," said Remus happily. "I need to get back."

Bill had soon filled all of our goblets, we stood and raised them high in a toast. "To Teddy Remus Lupin," said Remus, "a great wizard in the making!"

"Who does he look like?" I asked.

"I think he looks like Dora, but she thinks he is like me. Not much hair. It looked black when he was born, but I swear it's turned ginger in the hour since. Probably blond by the time I get back. Andromeda says Tonks's hair started changing color the day that she was born." He drained his goblet. "Oh, go on then, just one more," he added, beaming, as Bill made to fill it again.

"No... no... I really must get back," said Remus at last, declining yet another goblet of wine. He got to his feet and pulled his traveling cloak back around himself. "Good-bye, good-bye -- I'll try and bring some pictures in a few day's time --they'll all be so glad to know that I've seen you -- oh and Fawn, Andromeda told me to tell you she misses you dearly and hopes to see you soon."

He fastened his cloak and made his farewells, hugging the women and grasping hands with the men, then, still beaming, returned into the wild night.

Bill and Harry cleaned up while the rest of us were still celebrating, even though Remus was gone.

"Well, it's a happy day for you too!" said Hermione to me. "You have a grand-niece now!"

I beamed. "I'm so happy for them."

I picked up some empty goblets and opened the kitchen door, to see Harry and Bill speaking, both of them looking serious.

"Wait," Bill told me. "Just a moment."

I nodded and backed out again. For the respect of their privacy, I

moved far away so that I wouldn't hear their conversation. Maybe Bill would tell me later.

~53~ Percy's Arrival

Harry, Ron and Hermione told us they'd be leaving in two days, and that we didn't need to see them off. Bill lent them a tent and now they were preparing for their departure. The night before they left, I was in my room with Bill, and I was tracing lines on his palm.

"I hope they'll be alright," I said.

"Mhm."

"What were you an Harry talking about?" I asked.

Bill sighed. "I'd tell you but, Harry really didn't want me to know much, so I'd rather not repeat anything."

I nodded in understanding. The next morning, Bill informed me that the three were gone, along with the goblin. I nodded as Bill went downstairs. I suddenly felt sick and ran to the bathroom, retching into the toilet.

"Ugh," I muttered, wiping my mouth.

I brushed my teeth and froze. My period was almost a week late, even though it was always on time. I three up this morning, and I remember I threw up yesterday morning too. I had sex for the first time with Bill over a week ago.....

I grabbed my want and pointed it at my stomach. It glowed a bright green and I gasped. No way..... I couldn't be..... but I was.

I ran downstairs where Bill was serving breakfast and Luna and Dean were setting the table.

"What is-?" began Bill.

I ran at him screaming "I'M PREGNANT!"

Luna gasped and Dean dropped the plate he was holding. Bill pulled

away from me and stared at me.

"What?" he sputtered. "How-? When-?"

"I took the test now." I said. "With my wand."

He stared at me for a few more seconds, and my heart dropped. He wasn't happy. He didn't want a child.

But then he grinned and spun me around. "Oh my god I'm going to be a father!"

The rest of the day past with us celebrating. Luna and Dean had gotten over their shock and were thrilled as well. But then Luna and Dean both suddenly reached into their pockets and pulled out coins, staring at it, before looking back at each other.

"What's going on?" I asked, but Dean had already grabbed Luna's hand and they ran out of the door.

"WHERE ARE YOU TWO GOING?" Bill yelled.

Holding onto each other, they Disapperated.

"What on earth!" I said.

Almost just as soon as that happened, I saw Remus Apprating and running to us.

"We need to get to Hogwarts!" he yelled.

He didn't need to tell us twice. He followed Remus, but Bill turned around and grabbed my arm.

"No!" he said. "You can't come!"

"What why?" I asked.

Remus looked confused. "What?"

"Fawn," said Bill, ignoring Remus. "You're pregnant I'm not letting you go! That place has Death Eaters teaching there!"

Remus' mouth dropped open. "Pregnant?"

"No I'm coming!" I yelled.

"NO YOU AREN'T!"

And before I could say anything, Bill grabbed Remus' arm and they Apparated.

"ARGH!"

I didn't care, I was going. I Apparated straight into the Hog's Head. Aberforth sighed. "Alright, hurry up girl."

I ran through the portrait and pushed through, to see Bill, Remus, Sirius, Lucas, Damon, Finley, Fred, George, Mad-Eye, Kingsley, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, Oliver Wood, Katie Bell, Angelina Johnson, Alicia Spinnet and hundreds of other students.

Oliver saw me first. "Professor Black!"

Bill turned around and his face turned red. "I thought I told you to stay put!"

"NO!" I said angrily. "If you were called here, then something important is going to happen! I am not about to leave you!"

"She's a part of the Order Bill," said Mrs. Weasley looking confused. "Why would she not come?"

"Because she's pregnant!" Bill hissed, so that no one, but the three of us, would hear.

"Oh I'm going to have a grandchild!" she sobbed, then she stopped and pulled away. "WHAT WERE YOU THINKING, COMING HERE!"

"I WANT TO FIGHT!" I yelled back.

"FAWN BLACK-WEASLEY YOU BETTER GO BACK AND-"

The door opened and Harry and Luna were rushing down the stairs.

"Wha-?" asked Harry, staring at us.

"Harry what's happening?" asked Remus.

"Voldemort's on his way, they're barricading he school." said Harry. "Snape's run for it---What are you doing here? How did you know?"

"We sent messages to the rest of Dumbledore's Army," Fred explained. "You couldn't expect everyone to miss the fun, Harry, and the D.A. let the Order of the Phoenix know, and it all kind of snowballed."

"What first, Harry?" called George. "What's going on?"

"They're evacuating the younger kids and everyone's meeting in the Great Hall to get organized," Harry said. "We're fighting."

We all roared and started running past him. Bill pulled me back. "You're staying here!"

"No Bill!"

The crowd was thinning, and soon the only people left were me, Bill, Ginny, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, Remus, Sirius, Lucas, Damon, Finley, Fred and George.

"You're underage!" Mrs. Weasley shouted at her daughter. "I won't permit it! The boys, yes, but you, you've got to go home!"

"I won't! I'm in Dumbledore's Army!"

"A teenager's gang!"

"A teenagers' gang that's about to take him on, which no one else has dared todo!" said Fred.

"She's sixteen!" shouted Mrs. Weasley. "She's not old enough! What you two were thinking bringing her with you—-"

Fred and George looked slightly ashamed of themselves.

"And you!" yelled Mrs. Weasley at me. "You're pregnant!"

Everyone gasped and stared at me and Bill.

"Mum's right, Ginny," said Bill gently to Ginny. "You can't do this. Everyone underage will have to leave, it's only right." he turned to me. "Fawn, darling, please go home! if anything happens to you or the baby...."

"Hold on, pregnant?" asked Sirius.

"Since when?" asked Damon.

"Woah," whispered Lucas.

"Great timing." said Finley.

"I'm gonna be an uncle!" said George happily.

"Ew, did you two really have se-" began Fred, but Mrs. Weasley cut him off.

"Go home Ginny and Fawn." she said.

"I can't go home!" said Ginny, her eyes sparkling with tears.

"Our whole family's here!" I said.

Ginny looked at Harry, who shook his head and turned away.

"Fine," she said, staring at the entrance to the tunnel back to the Hog's Head. "I'll say good-by now, then, and---"

There was a scuffling and a great thump. Someone else had clambered out of the tunnel, overbalanced slightly, and fallen. He pulled himself up to the nearest chair, looked around through lopsided horn-rimmed glasses, and said, "Am I too late? Has it started? I only just found out, so I --- I ---"

~54~ Conflicts

Percy spluttered into silence. Evidently he had not expected to run into most of his family. There was a long moment of astonishment. He stared at us and we stared back, frozen.

Damon broke the awkward silence by saying loudly to Remus "So how's Teddy!"

Remus blinked. "Oh yes! He's great, staying with Tonks at her mother's."

They silence between Percy and us was almost unbearable.

"I've got a photograph!" Remus yelled, pulling it out and showing it to everyone, but the Weasley's.

"I was a fool!" Percy roared, so loudly that Remus almost dropped the photograph. "I was an idiot, I was a pompous prat, I was a – a --"

"Ministry-loving, family-disowning, power-hungry moron," said Fred.

Percy swallowed. "Yes, I was!"

"Well, you can't say fairer than that," said Fred, holding his hand out to Percy.

Mrs. Weasley burst into tears,. She ran forward, pushed Fred aside, and pulled Percy into a strangling hug, while he patted her on the back, his eyes on his father.

"I'm sorry, Dad," Percy said.

Mr. Weasley blinked rather rapidly, then he too hurried to hug his son.

"What made you see sense, Perce?" inquired George.

"It's been coming on for a while," said Percy, mopping his eyes under his glasses with a corner of his traveling cloak. "But I had to find a way out and it's not so easy at the Ministry, they're imprisoning traitors all the time. I managed to make contact with Aberforth and he tipped me off ten minutes ago that Hogwarts was going to make a fight of it, so here I am."

"Well, we do look to our prefects to take a lead at times such as these," said George in a good imitation of Percy's most pompous manner. "Now let's get upstairs and fight, or all the good Death Eaters'll be taken."

"So, you and Bill are finally married!" Percy said to me, sticking his hand out.

I stared at him and he looked slightly afraid, before I knocked his hand aside and hugged him tightly.

"I've missed you Percy," I said.

He hugged me tightly. "I've missed you too Fawn."

Everyone started leaving and Ginny and I tried to sneak with them.

"Ginny!" barked Mrs. Weasley, seeing us. "Fawn!"

"Molly, how about this," said Remus. "Why don't Fawn and Ginny stay here, then at least they'll be on the scene and know what's going on, but they won't be in the middle of the fighting?"

"I-" said Mrs. Weasley.

"I don't know-" began Bill.

"That's a good idea," said Mr. Weasley firmly, " Ginny, Fawn, you stay in this room, you hear me?"

I didn't like that idea, and I was sure Ginny didn't either, but under Mrs. Weasley's intense gaze, we nodded.

Damon, Lucas, Finley and Sirius hugged me.

"Don't worry Fawn," said Sirius.

"Just be safe," sad Finley, nodding to my stomach.

"I love you Fawn," said Damon kissing my forehead.

"Me too," said Lucas, kissing my cheek.

They left.

Bill kissed me deeply. "I just don't want you to get hurt darlin."

~ ~ ~

After a bit, Tonks and Neville's grandmother came in through the portrait.

"Tonks!" I said, hugging her tightly. "Aren't you supposed to be with Teddy?"

"I came to help Remus, Teddy will be alright with Mum."

I grinned.

"Why aren't you out there?" asked Tonks.

"Mrs. Weasley and Bill won't let me because I'm pregnant."

"YOU WHAT?"

I nodded.

Mrs. Longbottom came up to me. "Congrats dear, Neville is very fond of you, he speaks most highly of you."

I smiled and flushed.

Harry, Ron and Hermione came rushing down the stairs.

"Ah, Potter," Mrs. Longbottom said crisply. "You can tell us what's going on."

"Is everyone ok?" Ginny, Tonks and I asked together.

"As far as we know," said Harry. "Are there still people in the passage to the Hog's Head?"

"I was the last to come through," said Mrs. Longbottom. "I sealed it, I think it unwise to leave it open now Aberforth has left his pub. Have you seen my grandson?"

"He's fighting." Harry told her.

"Naturally," said the old lady proudly. "Excuse me, I must go and assist him." With surprising speed she trotted off toward the stone steps.

Harry looked at Tonks. "I thought you were supposed to be with Teddy at your mother's?"

"I couldn't stand not knowing –" Tonks looked anguished. "She'll look after him– have you seen Remus?"

"He was planning to lead a group of fighters into the grounds –"

Without another word, Tonks sped off.

"Ginny, Fawn," Harry said, turning to us. "I'm sorry but you two need to leave, then you can come back in."

Ginny and I grinned, and hurried off after Tonks.

"'HANG ON, YOU'VE BOTH GOT TO COME BACK IN WHEN I FINISH." he yelled.

When we ran through the doors, we ignored Harry's request to go back and, and with a nod at each other, Ginny and I joined the fight.

~55~ The Battle

We found Tonks right away, and helped her.

The walls and ceilings started rumbling, and outside Grawp the giant was meandering past, swinging what looked like a stone gargoyle torn from the roof and roaring his displeasure.

"Let's hope he steps on some of them!" said a voice.

I turned around to see Harry, Ron and Hermione back outside.

"As long as it's not any of our lot!" I yelled to them.

Ginny sent a well-aimed jinx into a crowd of fighters below.

"Good girl!" roared a figure running through the dust towards us, it was Aberforth, his gray hair flying as he led a small group of students past. "They look like they might be breaching the north battlements, they've brought giants of their own."

"Have you seen Remus?" Tonks called after him.

"He was dueling Dolohov," shouted Aberforth, "haven't seen him since!"

"Tonks," said Ginny, "Tonks, I'm sure he's okay –"

But Tonks had run off into the dust after Aberforth. Ginny and I turned to the three teenagers.

"They'll be all right," said Harry. "Ginny, Fawn, we'll be back in a moment, just keep out of the way, keep safe – come on!" he said to Ron and Hermione, and they ran away.

I raised my wand and Ginny hurried off.

"GINNY WHERE ARE YOU GOING" I yelled.

But she kept running off. Swearing, I turned back around, with my wand raised. I decided to stay put, just in case someone came back. After a few minutes, I saw Harry, Ron Hermione, Draco, and Goyle fly on brooms out of the Room of Requirement.

"Draco!" I called out, but almost just then, Fred and Percy backed into view ,both of them dueling masked and hooded men.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione and I ran forward to help: Jets of light flew in every direction and the man dueling Percy backed off, fast: Then his hood slipped and we saw a high forehead and streaked hair –

"Hello, Minister!" bellowed Percy, sending a neat jinx straight at Thicknesse, who dropped his wand and clawed at the front of his robes, apparently in awful discomfort. "Did I mention I'm resigning?"

"You're joking, Perce!" shouted Fred as the Death Eater he was battling collapsed under the weight of three separate Stunning Spells. Thicknesse had fallen to the ground with tiny spikes erupting all over him; he seemed to be turning into some form of sea urchin. Fred looked at Percy with glee.

"You actually are joking, Perce. . . . I don't think I've heard you joke since you were –"

The air exploded. I could see it, almost in slow motion, a large piece of wall flying at Fred. I grabbed Fred and pulled him to the ground. Breathing heavily, I sat up slowly.

"Are you alright?" I asked Fred.

He didn't answer. I looked at him to see his eyes closed.

"Fred!" I choked out, reaching out a finger and pressing it on his wrist.

I breathed a sigh of relief when I felt a faint pulse.

"FRED!" screamed Percy, running to us.

"He's alright." I said.

Harry, Ron and Hermione ran off, and I turned to Percy and Fred. Fred had woken up and I grabbed him.

"Let's go!" I yelled. "Come on! DRACO!"

I looked around, but I couldn't see my nephew anymore.

You have permitted your friends to die for you rather than face me yourself. I shall wait for one hour in the Forbidden Forest...One hour...

Voldemort spoke those words. It was suddenly silent. I walked with Percy and Fred to the Great Hall. Right away, I saw Tonks and Remus and I ran to them, hugging them tightly.

"Are you alright?" I whispered.

"I'm fine." said Tonks.

Remus hugged me.

"Where's everyone else?" I asked.

I looked around, looking at the dead bodies laying across the Great Hall. I saw the Weasley's, hugging Percy and Fred. Kingsley and Mad-Eye were helping Poppy with the injured.

I spotted Bill, Lucas, Damon and Sirius kneeling over someone.

"Bill! Lucas!" I yelled. "Sirius! Damon!"

I ran to them and gasped. The whole world seemed to stop. I couldn't breath. He couldn't be. He can't. There's not way. My best friend. No he *can't.*

I looked at Finley's lifeless eyes, staring up at the ceiling. Bill, Lucas and Damon were crying and Sirius stood there staring. I knelt down.

"FINLEY!" I screamed. "NO FINLEY NO!"

But there was nothing I could do or say.

Finley Moore was dead.

~56~ Harry's Dead

I don't know how long I sat there crying, until I couldn't cry anymore. I stood up and ran out of the Great Hall.

"FAWN!" Bill called out, but I ignored him.

I bumped into Draco.

"Aunt Fawn!" he said, pulling me into a hug.

I gasped for breath and hugged him.

"Oh Draco," I whispered.

We sat down, leaning against the wall.

"What happened?" Draco asked me.

"My best friend is gone." I whispered.

"I'm so sorry."

Draco took my hand as we sat there.

You're going to have a cousin." I said finally.

He looked at me. "What?" His eyes trailed down to my stomach and he smiled at me.

I stood up. "I'm going to go help."

He nodded. "I'll stay here, everyone knows I'm a Death Eater I-"

I hugged him before walking away. I saw Neville and Oliver.

"Oi!" I called out and they looked over.

Neville hugged me and Oliver shook my hand. I looked around and my face scrunched up, though no tears fell. I saw Colin Creevey

among the dead.

"You know what? I can manage him alone, Neville," said Oliver and he heaved Colin over his shoulder in a fireman's lift and carried him into the Great Hall.

Neville leaned against the door frame for a moment and wiped his forehead with the back of his hand. He looked like an old man. Then he set off on the steps again into the darkness to recover more bodies.

I helped carry bodies, knowing all from teaching them. I went back out to see Neville, bending over another body.

"Let me help." I said.

Neville looked up and nodded.

"Neville. Fawn."

Neville and I jumped and turned around to see Harry, holding his Invisibility Cloak.

"Blimey, Harry, you nearly gave me heart failure!" said Neville.

"Where are you going, alone?" I asked suspiciously.

"It's all part of the plan," said Harry. "There's something I've got to do. Listen ---Neville ---Fawn-"

"Harry!" Neville looked suddenly scared. "Harry, you're not thinking of handing yourself over?"

"Don't you dare Harry Potter!" I said angrily.

"No," Harry said. "'Course not . . . this is something else. But I might be out of sight for a while. You know Voldemort's snake. Neville? Fawn? He's got a huge snake . . . Calls it Nagini . . ."

I nodded. "Yea,"

"I've heard, yeah . . . What about it?" said Neville.

"It's got to be killed. Ron and Hermione know that, but just in case they --- " Harry stopped. "Just in case they're --- busy --- and you get the chance ---"

"Kill the snake?" asked Neville.

"Kill the snake," Harry repeated.

"Alright Harry." I said.

I hugged Harry, and he pulled the Cloak back on and left.

I kept helping with moving bodies to the Great Hall. Bill ran to me and hugged me.

"Fawn," he whispered. "Are you alright?"

I didn't answer, I just hugged him tighter. I sat down and Bill sat next to me, as I laid my head on his shoulder.

"Charlie and Rue are here." he said.

I looked around, and sure enough, they were next to Lucas and Damon, crying over Finley's body. After a bit, Voldemort's loud voice rang through the castle.

"Harry Potter is dead. He was killed as he ran away, trying to save himself while you lay down your lives for him. We bring you his body as proof that your hero is gone. The battle is won. You have lost half of your fighters. My Death Eaters outnumber you, and the Boy Who Lived is finished. There must be no more war. Anyone who continues to resist, man, woman or child, will be slaughtered, as will every member of their family. Come out of the castle now, kneel before me, and you shall be spared. Your parents and children, your brothers and sisters will live and be forgiven, and you will join me in the new world we shall build together."

Everyone stared at each other in horror. Harry wasn't dead. It was a mistake. Voldemort was wrong. But Harry wouldn't just run away. He had given himself up for us. I caught Neville's eye from a distance. Harry had lied to Neville and I. Harry had gone to Voldemort. To save us. We all rushed out to the front of the castle

and saw Voldemort approaching, with all the Death Eater's behind him. Hagrid was walking too, holding Harry's dead body.

"NO!" Minnie screamed.

Bellatrix started laughing at Minnie's despair. Tears flowed down my cheeks.

"No!" I screamed. "Harry!"

"No!" Ron yelled.

"Harry!" Hermione shrieked.

"NO Harry! Harry!" Ginny screamed.

Everyone started screaming and yelling abuse at the Death Eaters, until -

"SILENCE!" cried Voldemort, and there was a bang and a flash of bright light, and silence was forced upon us all. "It is over! Set him down, Hagrid, at my feet, where he belongs!"

Hagrid set Harry down at Voldemort's feet.

"You see?" said Voldemort, striding back and forth. "Harry Potter is dead! Do you understand now, deluded ones? He was nothing, ever, but a boy who relied on others to sacrifice themselves for him!"

"THAT IS A FUCKING LIE!" I yelled.

"He beat you!" yelled Ron, and the charm broke, and the defenders of Hogwarts were shouting and screaming again until a second, more powerful bang extinguished our voices once more.

"He was killed while trying to sneak out of the castle grounds," said Voldemort, and there was a relish in his voice for the lie. "killed while trying to save himself - " Voldemort saw Draco.

"Draco!" he said. "Come here."

Draco looked at his parents, who were beckoning Draco to go to

Voldemort. Draco started walking but I stopped him.

"Draco," I said. "Stay here."

Draco looked at me, unsure of what to do.

"Is this, the Fawn Black?" asked Voldemort.

Bellatrix nodded with delight. "Yes it is!"

"Join us now, Fawn Black, join your family." he stretched his arms to Bellatrix, Narcissa and Lucius.

"They aren't my family." I spat.

Bellatrix raised her wand and I automatically placed my hand over my stomach.

"Is the little traitor pregnant?" said Bellatrix happily.

"Fuck you." I snarled.

"Oh may I my Lord?" she said to Voldemort.

"You may." he said.

Bellatrix yelled "CRUCIO!"

I dropped to the ground and screamed out in pain.

"STOP!" bellowed Bill.

Neville ran forward with his wand drawn out. The pain stopped and I laid there panting. Neville yelled out in pain as Voldemort flicked his wand, a jet of light flying at Neville, and he was knocked to the ground. Draco and Bill ran forwards and helped me up.

"And who is this?" Voldemort said in his soft snake's hiss, looking at Neville.. "Who has volunteered to demonstrate what happens to those who continue to fight when the battle is lost?"

Bellatrix gave a delighted laugh. "It is Neville Longbottom, my Lord! The boy who has been giving the Carrows so much trouble! The son

of the Aurors, remember?"

"Ah, yes, I remember," said Voldemort, looking down at Neville, who was struggling back to his feet, unarmed and unprotected, standing in the no-man's-land between the survivors and the Death Eaters.

"But you are a pureblood, aren't you, my brave boy?" Voldemort asked Neville, who stood facing him, his empty hands curled in fists.

"So what if I am?" asked Neville.

"You show spirit and bravery, and you come of noble stock. You will make a very valuable Death Eater. We need your kind, Neville Longbottom."

"I'll join you when hell freezes over," said Neville. "Dumbledore's Army!" he shouted, and there was an answering cheer from the crowd, whom Voldemort's Silencing Charms seemed unable to hold.

"Very well," said Voldemort. "If that is your choice, Longbottom, we revert to the original plan. On your head," he said quietly, "be it."

Voldemort waved his wand. Seconds later, out of one of the castle's shattered windows, something that looked like a misshapen bird flew through the half light and landed in Voldemort's hand. He shook the mildewed object by its pointed end and it dangled, empty and ragged: the Sorting Hat.

"There will be no more Sorting at Hogwarts School," said Voldemort. "There will be no more Houses. The emblem, shield and colors of my noble ancestor, Salazar Slytherin, will suffice everyone. Won't they, Neville Longbottom?"

He pointed his wand at Neville, who grew rigid and still, then forced the hat onto Neville's head, so that it slipped down below his eyes. There were movements from the watching crowd in front of the castle, and as one, the Death Eaters raised their wands, holding the fighters of Hogwarts at bay.

"Neville here is now going to demonstrate what happens to anyone

foolish enough to continue to oppose me," said Voldemort, and with a flick of his wand, he caused the Sorting Hat to burst into flames.

Screams split the dawn, and Neville was a flame, rooted to the spot, unable to move.

"NEVILLE!" I yelled.

And then many things happened at the same moment.

~57~ The End Of A Long Battle

We heard uproar from the distant boundary of the school as what sounded like hundreds of people came swarming over the out-of-sight walls and pelted toward the castle, uttering loud war cries. At the same time, Grawp came lumbering around the side of the castle and yelled, "HAGGER!" His cry was answered by roars from Voldemort's giants: They ran at Grawp like bull elephants making the earth quake. Then came hooves and the twangs of bows, and arrows were suddenly falling amongst the Death Eaters, who broke ranks, shouting their surprise. I drew my wand out, and Neville stood up.

In one swift, fluid motion, Neville broke free of the Body-Bind Curse upon him; the flaming hat fell off him and he drew from its depths something silver, with a glittering, rubied handle, The slash of the silver blade could not be heard over the roar of the oncoming crowd or the sounds of the clashing giants or of the stampeding centaurs, and yet, it seemed to draw every eye. With a single stroke Neville sliced off the great snake's head, which spun high into the air, gleaming in the light flooding from the entrance hall, and Voldemort's mouth was open in a scream of fury that nobody could hear, and the snake's body thudded to the ground at his feet.

"HARRY!" yelled Hagrid. "WHERE'S HARRY!"

Chaos reigned. The charging centaurs were scattering the Death Eaters, everyone was feeling the giants' stamping feet, and nearer the thundered the reinforcements that had come from who knew where; Buckbeak the hippogriff scratching at their eyes while Grawp punched and pummeled them and now the wizards, defenders of Hogwarts and Death Eaters alike were being forced back into the castle.

I shot jinx after jinx at Death Eaters, until we all found ourselves back in the Great Hall. Voldemort was firing spells from his wand as he backed into the Great Hall, still screaming instructions to his followers as he sent curses flying left and right.

Voldemort saw me and shot a spell at me, but it ricocheted right off of the air. The centaurs Bane, Ronan and Magorian burst into the hall with a great clatter of hooves, as the door that led to the kitchens was blasted off its hinges. The house-elves of Hogwarts swarmed into the entrance hall, screaming and waving carving knives and cleaver, and at their head, was Kreacher, his bullfrog's voice audible even above this din: "Fight! Fight! Fight for my Master, defender of house-elves! Fight the Dark Lord, in the name of brave Regulus! Fight!"

I could see Charlie and Rue, fighting Death Eaters. Sirius, Remus and Tonks were battling Avery. Yaxley was slammed to the floor by George, Fred and Lee Jordan. Dolohov fell with a scream at Flitwick's hands. Walden Macnair thrown across the room by Hagrid, hit the stone wall opposite, and slide unconscious to the ground. Ron and Neville were bringing down Fenrir Greyback. Aberforth Stunned Rookwood. Arthur and Percy were flooring Thicknesse. Narcissa and Lucius were running through the crowd, not even attempting to fight, screaming for Draco.

Voldemort was now dueling Minnie, Mad-Eye, Slughorn, Kingsley and me all at once, and there was a cold hatred in his face as we wove and ducked around him, unable to finish him.

"YOU CAN GO TO FUCKING HELL!" I screamed at Voldemort.

Hundreds of people now lined the walls, watching the two fights, Voldemort and five opponents and Bellatrix and Molly.

I heard Bellatrix and Mrs. Weasley screaming at each other, and then Bellatrix fell. Minnie, Kingsley, Mad-Eye, Slughorn and I were sent flying backward as Voldemort's fury at the fall of his last, best lieutenant, exploded with the force of a bomb, Voldemort raised his wand and directed it at Molly Weasley.

"Protego!" someone yelled, and a Shield Charm expanded in the middle of the Hall.

Harry Potter pulled off his Invisibility Cloak.

"HE'S ALIVE!" I yelled happily from the floor.

Bill dragged me up and silence fell, as we watched Harry and Voldemort circle each other.

"I don't want anyone else to help," Harry said loudly, as me and a few others stepped forward. "It's got to be like this. It's got to be me."

Voldemort hissed. "Potter doesn't mean that," he said, his red eyes wide. "This isn't how he works, is it? Who are you going to use as a shield today, Potter?"

"Nobody," said Harry simply. "There are no more Horcruxes. It's just you and me. Neither can live while the other survives, and one of us is about to leave for good. . . ."

"One of us?" jeered Voldemort. "You think it will be you, do you, the boy who has survived by accident, and because Dumbledore was pulling the strings?"

"Accident, was it, when my mother died to save me?" asked Harry. "Accident, when I decided to fight in that graveyard? Accident, that I didn't defend myself tonight, and still survived, and returned to fight again?"

"Accidents!" screamed Voldemort. "Accident and chance and the fact that you crouched and sniveled behind the skirts of greater men and women, and permitted me to kill them for you!"

"You won't be killing anyone else tonight," said Harry as they circled. "You won't be able to kill anyone else again. Don't you get it? I was ready to die to stop you from hurting these people - "

"But you did not!"

" - I meant to, and that's what did it. I've done what my mother did. They're protected from you. Haven't you noticed how none of the spells you put on them are binding? You can't torture them. You can't touch them. You don't learn from your mistakes, Riddle, do you?"

"You dare!"

"Yes, I dare," said Harry.

The kept circling each other, going back and forth.

"The true master of the Elder Wand was Draco Malfoy." said Harry.

"But what does it matter?" Voldemort said softly. "Even if you are right, Potter, it makes no difference to you and me. You no longer have the phoenix wand: We duel on skill alone . . . and after I have killed you, I can attend to Draco Malfoy . . ."

"But you're too late," said Harry. "You've missed your chance. I got there first. I overpowered Draco weeks ago. I took his wand from him."

Harry twitched the hawthorn wand, and everyone's eyes fell on it.

"So it all comes down to this, doesn't it?" whispered Harry. "Does the wand in your hand know its last master was Disarmed? Because if it does . . . I am the true master of the Elder Wand."

"Avada Kedavra!"

"Expelliarmus!"

The bang was like a cannon blast, and the golden flames that erupted between them, at the dead center of the circle they had been treading, marked the point where the spells collided. The Elder Wand went spinning into the air, and Harry caught it as Voldemort hit the floor with a mundane finality, his body feeble and shrunken, the white hands empty, the snakelike face vacant and unknowing. Voldemort was dead, killed by his own rebounding curse, and Harry stood with two wands in his hand, staring down at his enemy's shell.

Everyone was silent, and then cheers and cry's broke around the Great Hall. Everyone ran towards Harry. Ron and Hermione reached him first. Then Ginny, Luna, Neville. Then me all of us Weasley's. And Sirius, Remus, Tonks, Lucas, Damon, Mad-Eye, Kingsley, Minnie, Filius, Pomona, everyone trying to hug a part of Harry.

We moved the body of Voldemort far away from the body of Finley, Colin Creevey, and the others who died to fight for Harry. Minnie had replaced the House tables, but nobody was sitting according to House anymore: All were jumbled together, teachers and pupils, ghosts and parents, centaurs and house-elves, and Firenze lay recovering in the corner, and Grawp peered in through a smashed window, and people were throwing food into his laughing mouth.

I found myself with Bill, Lucas, Remus, Tonks, and Sirius. As we ate, I felt a twang in my heart. Finley would never see this day. Finley didn't know if Harry saved us all or not. I wiped at my face and Bill hugged me. Suddenly Luna cried out "Oooh, look, a Blibbering Humdinger!" and pointed out the window. Everyone who heard looked out of the window.

Families were being reunited, and I saw the three Malfoy's sitting together in a distance. No one paid them any attention.

"I'll be right back." I said to everyone.

I quickly walked towards the Malfoy's, and Draco saw me first. He broke free from his mother's grip and bolted at me.

"Aunt Fawn!" he yelled, throwing his arms around me.

"Draco." I said, wrapping my arms around him.

We stayed like that, just hugging each other, for a long time. Narcissa and Lucius came forward.

"Hello," I said.

Narcissa burst into tears and threw her arms around me, sobbing on my shoulder. I patted her back gently and she pulled away.

"I'm sorry!" she said, wiping her tears away. "I'm sorry for everything."

I took her hands in mine. "You don't need to be sorry for anything."

Lucius grasped my hands. "Thank you Fawn, for helping our son, and taking care of him here at school."

I beamed at them.

"Now," said Narcissa. "You're pregnant?"

I nodded and she grinned. "Oh I wonder, is it a boy or girl?"

"I'm not sure yet."

I looked back over my shoulder, at my husband, friends and family.

"Why don't you come sit with us?" I said, taking Draco's hand.

And we all sat, celebrating the end of the long battle.

~58~ Finale

Twelve Years Later:

"FINLEY!" I yelled. "MINNIE. COME DOWN NOW OR YOU WILL MISS THE TRAIN!"

My two eleven year old twins, Finley and Minerva, came running down the stairs.

"Did two you pack your trunks?" I asked them.

They nodded.

"Dad helped." said Minnie.

"Alright, now come eat breakfast." I said. "Come on we don't want to be late!"

I quickly filled their plates with toast and eggs, as they sat down and started eating. Bill came down, using his wand to levitate two trunks, while our ten year old son Arthur, and our six year old daughter Molly, trotted after him.

"Daddy I want to go to Hogwarts!" said Molly tearfully.

"Me too!" said Arthur, frowning.

"Arthur you'll go next year." said Bill, placing the trunks by the fireplace. "And Molly, you still have a few years to go."

Molly crossed her arms. "That's not fair!"

"But we have so much fun Molls! Especially when I do.....this!"

Bill ran at Molly, picked her up, and started running around, holding Molly as if she was flying. Molly squealed with laughter while I watched smiling.

"Alright alright," I said. "Come on if you want to eat before we leave!"

Bill placed Molly on a chair at the table, while Arthur sat down.

"Finley, do not throw food at your brother!" I said to Finley, as he threw bits of toast at Arthur.

Arthur stuck his tongue out at Finley. "Yea Fin, stop being an arse."

"Arthur Black-Weasley!"

"Sorry mum."

After eating breakfast, we went to Kings Cross station.

"Alright Finley, you first." I said, squeezing his shoulder. "Just run straight at the wall, between platform nine and ten, and you'll find yourself on platform platform nine and three-quarters. You won't feel a thing."

Finley took a deep breath and ran at the brick wall, vanishing from sight.

"You next Minnie," I said.

She quickly went through.

"You go first." said Bill, who had Molly on his shoulders.

I grabbed Arthur's hand and we ran at the wall. I saw Finley and Minnie waiting for us. Bill and Molly came through and we stood in front of the train.

"Look, there's cousin Tonks!" said Molly, hitting Bill's head in her excitement.

"Molly dear, don't hit your fathers head." I said to Molly

Tonks, Remus and Teddy pushed their way to us.

"Hi Aunt Fawn," said Teddy, his hair bright blue. "Hi Uncle Bill."

"Hi Teddy," I said, hugging him.

"Teddy Teddy!" said Molly, as Bill set her down. "Do the hair! Do the hair!"

Teddy grinned at Molly and turned his hair pink, then purple, before turning it back to blue.

Molly clapped her hands. "Yay!"

Remus picked Molly up. "I swear you've gotten taller since I've last seen you!"

"You only saw us last weekend!" laughed Finley.

"She's still grown up to be a little lady since then." said Tonks, her hair her usual bubble-gum pink.

The train horn blew loudly.

"Alright everyone on the train!" I said, kissing Finley and Minnie. "Arthur get back here!" I added.

Arthur was trying to sneak onto the train but Remus had grabbed him and pulled him back. Bill, Arthur and Molly were saying goodbye to the twins, while Remus and Tonks said goodbye to Teddy, then we switched.

"Don't get into too much trouble." I said, hugging Teddy.

Bill ruffled Teddy's hair. "Write to us."

"I'll *try* not to cause much trouble," Teddy said with a grin. "Of course I'll write, and I'll also watch over Finley and Minnie."

I beamed. Since it was Teddy's second year, Finley and Minnie decided they would spend all their time with him.

The train blew again, and Finley, Minnie and Teddy jumped onto the train. Molly started crying.

"Don't cry Molls!" said Minnie.

"We'll write everyday!" Finley announced.

"Bye everyone!" said Teddy.

Molly jumped into my arms and I picked her up. Arthur stood beside Bill, while Remus and Tonks had their arms around each other. The train started to roll away. Finley, Minnie and Teddy were leaning out of a window, waving at us. We kept waving and watching until the train disappeared from view.

~THE END~